

# It Takes Two to Tango: Building Intercultural Coaching Relationships – a German Mexican Context



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<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>In the past decades coaching as a human resource development tool has gained significant attention. In many countries around the world it is a flowering industry with many practitioners constantly entering the field, causing the amount intercultural coaching dyads to rise. The existing research corpus explores the coaching service from different angles, e.g. with regards to techniques or effectiveness. Most literature underscores the importance of the coach-coachee relationship; however, few studies transform this into an investigation topic. Even less attention is paid to this topic in an intercultural setting.</p> <p>This research shall consequently identify the aspects that act in the establishment of a coach-coachee relationship within a German-Mexican context. Furthermore, the influence of culture, especially national culture, will be examined. The thesis has three central aims. Firstly, this investigation shall enlarge the scarce research on the topic. Secondly, the data is examined from a modern cultural paradigm where culture is understood as a not self-evident or structured attribute, but a constructed creation between individuals. Thirdly, implications for practitioners in intercultural coaching shall be brought forwards.</p> <p>In accordance with the ontological understanding of human interaction and in line with the understanding of the concept of culture, the exploration of this thesis's topic is done with the help of qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews with an interpretivist-constructivist thematic content analysis technique lead to meaningful results.</p> <p>As a core result, this research shows a large variety of relationship-building aspects in intercultural coaching which is due to a subjective assessment of the influence of culture on relationship, coaching and intercultural encounters. In this regards, a cultural lens was identified that has a predominantly positivistic, essentialist and static understanding of culture. Moreover, correlations between cultural understanding, the understanding of coaching and the depth of relationship are shown. All research participants further build and assess the coaching relationship with the help of multicollective, dynamic and interpersonal factors, indicating a modern cultural understanding, to co-create the reciprocal relationship and coaching culture.</p> <p>Practitioners may consequently want to courageously, and willingly, reconsider and 'un-learn' cultural concepts in order to avoid an overestimation of cultural influence in interactions, to meet the client's needs and to live up to the diversification of culture.</p>			
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<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>1. Introduction: Positioning and Presenting the Research Work.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Research .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. Culture, the Intercultural and the Turbulences Around the Terms .....	6
2.2 Coaching and the Intercultural .....	11
2.3. The Coaching Relationship .....	16
<b>3. How and Why I Did What I Did – Theoretical Approach and Methodology .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1. Theoretical Approach – the Understanding of Social Interactions for this Work .....	22
3.2. Research Design – Research Topic, Questions, Hypothesis, Methodology and Technique .....	25
3.3. The Data .....	27
3.4. Qualitative Content Data Analysis – Thematic Text Analysis .....	31
<b>4. What to Consider When Building a Coaching Relationship? Findings and Analysis .....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1. Aspects that Play a Role in the Relationship Between Coach and Coachee .....	36
4.2. Cultural Lens: Cultural Influence as the Subjective Interpretation .....	51
4.3. Creating Culture and Relationship Together .....	63
<b>5. Where Does this Leave Us? Concluding Discussion .....</b>	<b>69</b>
5.1. Results and Implications for Practitioners .....	69
5.2. Critical Acknowledgment and Future Research .....	73
<b>6. Bibliography .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>7. Appendices .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Interviewee Form .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Interview Guidelines: Categories and Questions .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Appendix 2a: German Guideline .....	85

Appendix 2b: Spanish Guideline .....	87
Appendix 2c: English Guideline .....	89
<b>Appendix 3: Interview Transcripts .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Appendix 3a: Transcript ID1 .....	91
Appendix 3b: Transcript ID2 .....	96
Appendix 3c: Transcript ID3 .....	104
Appendix 3d: Transcript ID4 .....	112
Appendix 3e: Transcript ID5 .....	120

## **1. Introduction: Positioning and Presenting the Research Work**

Coaching is a buzzword in today's business and social life. The amount of people that dedicate their professional focus partially or fully to this counselling service has risen radically in the past decades. Despite its diverse area of application, coaching generally aims at the improvement of the coachee's performance in a desired topic (Pousa and Mathieu 2014, 76). Generally there are few quantifiable statistics on coaches as in most countries there is little to no requirement to register when working as a coach practitioner (Bresser 2009, 19). Yet, there are two studies that were conducted to represent the state-of-art of coaching until the time being: the Global Coaching Survey 2008/2009 by Bresser Consulting (ibid.) and International Coach Federation (ICF) Global Coaching Survey 2016 (International Coach Federation 2016). With awareness of the publication date and the related relevance of the data, it is stated that there are in total 43,000-44,000<sup>1</sup> (Bresser 2009, 7) coach practitioners in the world although "more than two thirds of all coaches are based in the European Union, USA and Canada which represent just 13% of the world population." (ibid., 7) In the more recent ICF report (2016) the number is indicating 53 300 coaches (ibid., 8). Most practitioners are active in companies with clients that hold leading (manager (29%), CEO or CFO (23%)) (ibid., 15) positions or in other business related contexts. 19 per cent (ibid., 15) of the coaches state to have private clients. A considerable characteristic of the field of coaching is its diversity in coaching approaches and practices. Diversity here refers to coaching aspects that focus on different national-cultural clients, gender groups, age diversity and different profession traits among many other facets.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned reports give insights on the two countries relevant for the presented study. Germany is among the seven countries with the highest amount

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<sup>1</sup> In the report the term business coach is used, nevertheless it is not clear if it refers to coaches that specialize on business coaching or if they are coaches that do coaching as a business in general. This confusion of terms shows the incautious or loose use of terminology in the field. In any way one can assume that the estimated number of unknown cases is quite large since coaching is also popular in other sectors.

of coaches on the globe. Together they make 73 per cent of all coaches worldwide but only 10 per cent of the world's population (Bresser 2009, 7). With a total of around five thousand coaches, wide acceptance of coaching as a profession and multiple coaching associations, Germany's coaching scene is well located in the growth state and thus has a well developed coaching industry. In Mexico around 600 coaches were active during the time of data collection for the report, yet, as Mexico is seen as a country where coaching as a profession is emerging, although it's still not in the growth face, there are probably more coaches by now. Nevertheless, it is not yet officially recognized as a profession (Bresser 2009, 12) in the country. However, coaching as a human resource development tool seems to be widely accepted in the business sphere, but there are prevailing problems of practitioners without credentials that put the professionalization of coaching at risk in the country<sup>2</sup> (ibid., 142).

Coaching is not only gaining popularity in the (international) business sphere, but also in academic research. As a result of the internationalising and globalising interaction contexts in businesses and societies coaching as a developmental tool is also gaining attention in the intercultural field. Similarly to the broad variety of coaching disciplines, coaching in an intercultural setting has many descriptive terms as well: cross-cultural coaching, intercultural coaching, culturally reflexive coaching, multicultural coaching, to name a few. Analogously to the coaching buzzword, also intercultural, multicultural, transcultural and many other terms seem to be in everyone's vocabulary nowadays, even more so in the vocabulary of politicians, journalists and economists. This does not come as a surprise since the rise of nationalist and right-wing-populist discussions are an issue of high importance in the midst of recent migratory movements around the globe. With the intercultural discipline predominantly driving at enhancing mutual understanding and leveraging the potential of diversity, its primary aim is to ameliorate human living-together.

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<sup>2</sup> It is noteworthy that despite those numbers I had more Mexican than German participants for this research.

Combining the two terms briefly explained above you get a ‘hyper’ buzzword, which shall be the main topic for this research: Intercultural Coaching. This service is predominantly used in a private (business) surrounding, yet, depending on the definition it also has a wide range in the non-profit and public sector.

While many studies on coaching in general as well as on intercultural preparations and readiness activities have been carried out, the investigations have often overseen the predecessor for the outcome of any of these activities: the relationship that the interacting people build. While in coaching literature the relationship is frequently highlighted as an important, if not the most important, factor for the coaching outcome (Bluckert 2005, 336), the research that focuses on it is scarce (Pauw 2017, 2). However, some studies can be found (Baron and Morin 2009, 89-93), yet only a few address the relationship in an intercultural setting (Nangalia and Nangalia 2010, 52). At this stage there is no research done that addresses the coaching relationship in a German-Mexican setting, as far as I am aware of. With this said, the research gap is evident.

Consequently, this empirical work will investigate the relationship building between coach and coachee in an intercultural coaching setting, which will be explored in a German-Mexican setting. Based on the aforementioned justification my first research question arose and I will therefore explore the aspects that play a role when establishing a coach-coachee relationship, when they identify with different cultural groups.

The second research question is closely connected to the first, yet, I must provide the context out of which this question arose. For this I shall further highlight my personal struggles when dealing with intercultural topics. Starting my academic education and professional experiences gaining knowledge about the *older/traditional* theories (Hall 1981; Hofstede 1991; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2002; Lewis 2006) I perceived culture and interculturality as something almost tangible, clearly identifiable and somewhat measurable. During my Master’s study I was confronted with *new/modern* theories and understandings of culture (Bolten 2007; Pillar 2011; Ratje 2007; Ganesh 2015) where culture is created between people and an intercultural encounter occurs basically everywhere and all the time. This ‘critical’ approach

consequently led me to do a lot of self-reflection work that would eventually enable me to identify my own understanding of culture and intercultural encounters. Now, clearly positioning myself as a person and a researcher within the modern understanding of culture, I have had struggle to pin down and explain what exactly it is that may cause friction, difficulties and challenges in intercultural situations. Together with the previous research done in the intercultural and coaching field I have noticed that researchers highlight national cultural differences as possible influencers in intercultural encounters, and in coaching relationships (Milner et al. 2013, 28-29). Therefore, my second research question explores this in the coaching alliance: What aspects of the relationship in coaching can be assigned to national-cultural traits, if at all? Can these traits be named and to what extend, and why, do they have an influence of the coaching alliance?

As previously explained, an approach from within the *modern* cultural understanding is taken for this research, which, as we shall see later in this work, attributes a diversity of cultures to the individual, out of which only one is the national culture. Furthermore, in intercultural interactions a multitude of dynamics, constructions and interpretations are evident. Therefore, the hypothesis for this work is as follows: There are various aspects that play a role in the relationship building, yet, they cannot be assigned merely to national-cultural traits due to the dynamic nature of relationships and culture.

Like other researches with similar topics (Pauw 2017; Peterson 2007; Plaister-Ten 2009), or topics treating similarly dynamic constructs to mine (Saarenmaa 2013, Shin 2014, Wotruba 2016), I will explore the research question with the help of qualitative research data, in form of semi-structured interviews. In accordance with the ontological understanding of human interactions for this work, I will take an interpretivist-constructionist approach (Morrow 2007, 213) when executing the thematic, qualitative content data analysis. In this process I am well aware of my positions as a researcher where my formation's locality in a western education system, perceptions, preconceptions and convictions, among many other aspects, play a role when analysing the collected data.



Being aware of the previous aspect is also an aspiration of mine for this research piece, as I believe that as researchers we shall reflect on our own viewpoints and locality. Furthermore, apart from contributing to the intercultural coaching research, I chose this topic because I would like to learn more about coaching as a professional service since it will possibly qualify me for professional positions after my graduation. Moreover, I am convinced that every person, despite their age, gender, ethnicity, life situation or professional industry, might be in need of professional counselling at some stage during their life where coaching can provide an important tool to help them find their way. This can potentially smoothen some of today's problems since intercultural coaching is on the intersection of empowering and learning for the individual. The ubiquity of intercultural encounters in the present will only increase in the future and intercultural awareness and competence is crucially important, which was also a motivation to choose *intercultural* coaching as a coaching type. Last but not least, I also aim at broadening my (international) network in the intercultural field with this research by reaching out to coaching participants or academic scholars.

In the following work I will start with providing the theoretical framework for this research, tapping into the explanations of cultural theory and intercultural understanding. Furthermore, previous research in both fields, but particularly addressing the coaching relationship, will be outlined. In the methodology chapter (3.) I shall sketch all aspects that come into play when designing, executing and writing an empirical work. Here, I will also outline further how theoretical assumptions determine the methodological methods for this work. Following, I will display the findings brought forward from the data and analyse it, contradicting or confirming it with theory or previous research. The sub-categorization can hereby be seen as one of the research results itself (Pauw 2017, 43). In the concluding discussion I will outline the results while connecting them to the research questions posed initially. The aim is also to prove or disprove the hypothesis. Furthermore, I will critically reflect on the methodology and this research as a whole. Since this is a work that is closely connected to some peoples' profession, I shall outline some implications for their work based on the results, before I

outline further research ideas.

In regards to the reference system, I shall mention that I systematically include one or various page ((Author date, 1) or (Author date, 1-3 or 1,5,20)) numbers when referring to a specific aspect in the scholarly text or when citing a direct quotation. Only when the reference is associating the academic piece as a whole (e.g. the general topic of a paper) or on a general level, I leave the page indications out.

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Research**

In this chapter I shall explain, state and provide all necessary information the reader requires to understand the content analysis that follows in chapter 4. While more references to theoretical points and issues are made during the analysis of the research data, in this chapter the most significant frameworks are outlined.

### **2.1. Culture, the Intercultural and the Turbulences Around the Terms**

There are abundant termini referring to the discipline, the concepts, the process, the characteristics and factors of encounters between people that identify with different groups: culture, intercultural (-alism), transcultural (-alism), multicultural (-alism), bi-cultural (-ism), intercultural competence and intercultural communication are only some terminologies mentioned in this regards. Nevertheless, in least cases the underlying definition of such terms, concepts and theories are neither coherent nor always compatible – they are elusive. The interchangeable use of *intercultural* and *multicultural*, for example, is a vivid example found on a daily basis.

Increasingly in the post-millennial era a versatile discussion among practitioners and academics took place about the re-definition of terms and concepts in the intercultural field. Re-stating the essence of culture, intercultural, communication and many other components in the intercultural research area is the so often referred to *paradigm shift* (Poutiainen 2014, 3) in the field. The variety of definitions of culture across disciplines

is so diverse that one 'right' definition is evidently impossible, given that academic disciplines define and use the term according to their academic stance (Busch and Möller-Kiero 2016, 53). While scholars continuously intend to capture the dimensions and range of definitions of culture, such as Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952, 41-141) who have gathered 164 definitions of the term, it keeps being impalpable and the "definitions of the central term culture and its derivatives seem as manifold as the repetitive lament about the difficulties of agreeing upon a common understanding of culture in social interaction." (Otten and Geppert 2009, chapter 1) Consequently, I will briefly outline the discussion around the term and signalise two overarching tendencies that became obvious in the past. Thereafter, I shall outline the understanding and definition of culture for this work as it determines the use of terms such as intercultural on one hand and locates the research timely on the other hand. Moreover, it determines significantly the analysis carried out in chapter 4.

Generally, the discussion around the term culture - as the starting point for all other terms used in this regards - can be separated into two opposing poles. On the one hand there are the structural approaches and on the other hand there are the process-oriented approaches to culture (Pauw 2017, 8), or as outlined by Weber and Dacin (2011, 287) there are two waves of (inter-) cultural research: first wave in the 1980's and second wave since 2000's. Similarly, the scholar Jürgen Bolten (2007, 14) calls them the first modernity and the second modernity. In the former mentioned pole the research and results are largely based on quantitative results. Typical representatives and seminal theorists in this field are Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, Richard D. Lewis and Charles Hampden-Turner (Poutiainen 2014, 3; Otten and Geppert 2009, chapter 2.1). Their approach to culture views such as a solid (Dervin 2011, 38), structural, measurable and collective construct that is created and maintained by the individuals in groups and is transmitted through socialization to the individual in the institution. Here, culture is consequently something implicit that belongs to every person. The representatives and practitioners that use theories and models based on that understanding focus on culture as a source of conflict and friction in the context of cross-cultural encounters and see solutions in the enhancement of culture-specific

knowledge to avoid constraint and to shift the frame of reference (Friedman 2014, 20). This positivistic, functionalist, bi-polar and comparative view on culture tends to see culture as a synonym to the nation state, which is automatically politically, geographically and linguistically tied and homogeneous. Otten and Geppert (2009) define this approach as *being culture* that “emphasizes the embeddedness of all social actions in genuine traditions, norms, values of a given social world respectively” (ibid., chapter 2.1.2). The scholar Jürgen Bolten (2007, 14) named this understanding a “container” understanding of culture and characterized it as a believe in statics, structure and controllability, coherent identities, concreteness and an ‘either-or’-thinking. Even though the methods and theories suggested in *older* paradigm deliver relevancy due to precise observation, statistic relevance and therefore give at-hand implications for interaction in highly ritualized norms (greeting, eating) in certain contexts, they are to be questioned in intercultural encounters in general as quantitative cultural research can lead to ‘economic fallacy’<sup>3</sup> for the individuals’ interactions. In other words, when statistic results from a macro analyses of culture are used for analysis in the micro context, for example interaction between individuals, it can lead to faulty conclusions about the individual; some scholars also refer to sophisticated stereotyping in this regards (Osland et al. 2000, 66).

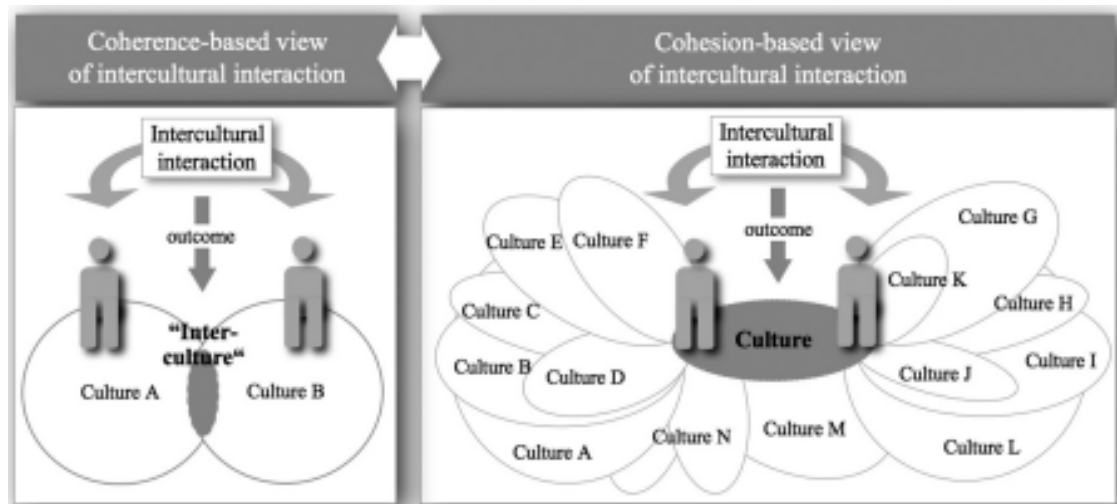
Scholar and practitioners noticed the problematics in the approach and the work on culture and interculturality has taken a turn since the 2000s: “Traditional coaching and training models are no longer effective if they do not consider diversity as a theme” (Passmore and Law 2013, 2). Noticing that all encounters between humans take place between individuals, thus interpersonally, a more diverse approach to culture has been identified. This approach is process-oriented meaning that encounters between humans have a multitude of factors that affect and (may) become salient during the process of the encounter. Culture, in other words, reveals in practical action and is explicit. Such factors can show as gender, age, social status, professional level, power structure (e.g. language proficiency), prejudices, ingroup - outgroup dynamics, personalities, among

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from German by K.Kulpmann. Original: “ökonomischer Fehlschluss”(Pauw 2017, 9).

many others. Culture is perceived as a dynamic, liquid (Dervin 2011, 38) and constantly changing flux. Here the reciprocity between actors becomes evident and a constant meaning-making in the encounter is evident. This also delves a lot into interpersonal science and intersubjectivity (Yu 2013, 14), yet, providing detailed information on these research fields would go beyond the scope of this work. However, this understanding of culture believes that multiple cultures belong to the individual, rather than to nations or countries; culture is not given but created. This level of individual agency makes people make use of different cultural aspects in the situation and context they are in. As these change, individuals logically will not make use of the same cultural aspects in different situations. Imagining people as the inherent cultural agent therefore shows a diversity of culture in each individual. Stefanie Ratje (2007) names this diversity of cultures in the individuals “multicollectivity” (ibid., 262). The scholar describes individuals as being part of many collectives at the same time, and further states that “the establishment of normality” is the centrifugal force “rather than generally agreed-upon norms or values that give their cohesion” (ibid., 262). In other words, the normality that all individuals are part of multiple collectives diminishes differences and is the glue that holds groups, societies and nations together, given that “the culture’s most essential criterion and its most effective and profound achievement is to define normality” (ibid., 262). In this approach culture is seen as networks that overlap on their edges and have a reciprocal behaviour. Due to this complex diversity of each individual’s belonging to multiple collectives, all human interactions are automatically intercultural. Interculturality is consequently the space in which the connection between individuals of different ‘cultures’ – meaning collectives, groups, clubs, nations, institutions, organizations, genders, ages, statuses, convictions, religions, etc. - occurs due to the context-dependent aspects that move into the foreground. To speak in Yu’s (2013) words: “In this culturally complex world, many individuals have more than one layer of cultural programming which constitutes their cultural repertoire.” (ibid., 17) Consequently, “people scan their cultural repertoires and choose a certain cultural practice according to their understanding of the context and the goals they want to achieve in the situation.” (ibid., 17).

In sum, the difference between a static or coherence-based vs. a fluid or cohesion-based view on intercultural interactions is well seen in the figure by Ratje (2007, 264):



Picture 1: Coherence-based vs. cohesion-based view of intercultural interactions

At this point I should mention that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ definition of culture and it is important to not fall into a frantic believer in either of the two pillars but be flexible about their use, as long as their use is suitable for the context and does not lead to false association in their recipient. However, even though the *modern* understandings of culture and interculturality are not necessarily well received and perceived by the industry – including the intercultural industry (e.g. intercultural training)- due to its little marketability evoked by complexity, the need for a recapitulation and new concepts and theories that are as ground breaking as the field’s seminal theories (mentioned above) is evident.

Given the increased globalisation in all aspects of life and the resulting internationalization of *culture*, alongside the year in which this research is written, it is natural that the underlying understanding of culture is a *modern* understanding with the definition previously outlined. There is one other aspect that became clear to me and that also underlines the importance of a *modern* understanding of culture for this work: As will be seen in the methodology chapter 3, the ontological positions towards culture give perspective to the research topic. In the case of this research that treats

relationships, it is clearly an interpersonal, micro-level interaction that cannot be augmented with cultural theories and models that investigate macro-level interaction, such as Hofstede and Hall. The naming of such seminal authors in a random way underlines the fact that the researcher has not understood the underlying ontological positions and the resulting methodologies of such researchers (Otten and Geppert 2009, note 8).

Culture in this work is consequently not self-evident or structured but created and constructed between individuals that make use of their variety of diverse cultural aspects and create and interpret an intercultural context in the moment.

## 2.2. Coaching and the Intercultural

### Coaching as a boom area – what it is and how it's different to other counselling forms?

Coaching as a profession and human development tool, as well as a research field, has developed significantly in the past (Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 7) and continues to grow (Bachkirova et al. 2014, 1). Nowadays around 53.300 people work as professional coaches around the world (International Coach Federation 2016, 8). This can be seen as a result of a dynamic, fast changing vocational and societal world with its new complexity where the need for individuals to stay oriented and deliver performance is desired.

Looking at the origin of the word coaching it is stated to be from the Hungarian word “*Kocs*” (Bachkirova et al. 2014, 2), which was a town where horse carriages were made. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the term was predominantly used in the field of sport and referred to a development to enhance performance. Coaching as a human development tool as it is today is historically located to come from the United States, where many practitioners are found also today, yet, has a broad distribution of practitioners also in Europe, especially the UK and Germany, and in Australia (Bresser 2009, 7). More precisely, estimated numbers show that around 68 per cent of all coaches originate from North America (22%) (excluding Mexico) or Western Europe (38%) (International Coach Federation 2016, 7). Originally coming as a trend to Europe from the US in the

80's, it developed a diversity of approaches over the years in Europe (Bresser 2009, 107).

Coaching as a profession is not a protected term, unlike *psychologist* or *therapist* for example, and has many definitions. I want to outline three definitions here and hold them against the definition of the neighbouring disciplines – mentoring, counselling and therapy- from which coaching draws inspiration yet distinguishes itself against.

Following, out of the abundant definitions of coaching, I will provide three:

International Coach Federation (Coach Federation n.d.)	“ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”
Coaching Across Cultures (Rosinski 2003, 4)	“I [Rosinski] define coaching as the art of facilitating the unleashing of people’s potential to reach meaningful, important objectives.”
The Complete Handbook of Coaching (Bachkirova et al. 2014, 1)	“Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interactions and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders.”

Not only the definitions are very varied, also the types of coaching have a large range and go from executive coaching, transformational coaching, life (-style) coaching and



career coaching to relationship coaching, change coaching and wellness coaching, amongst many others.

To understand what coaching is *not* and to distinguish it from other counselling services, there is an invitingly simple example provided through the metaphor of driving a car (Bresser and Wilson 2010, 21):

- *A therapist will explore what is stopping you driving your car.*  
Therapy is generally aiming at an improvement of the psychological state of the client; coaching predominantly drives at moving the coachee forward to an aimed goal without too much emotional depth of the psychological state of client. Therapy and coaching may overlap in various techniques and methods, yet, in therapy the topics typically rise from previous trauma (Döring 2011, 19) whereas in coaching from personal desire and current ‘issues’.
- *A counsellor will listen to your anxieties about the car.*  
This might be suitable for “the newly bereaved who need to explore their grief over a period of time before [emphasis by the author] moving on” (ibid., 22). Coaching comes in potentially right after this process is finished, as it is a forward-moving service for the client.
- *A mentor will share tips from his or her own experience of driving cars.*  
Whereas in mentoring a transmission of knowledge takes place (e.g. examples, contacts, tips, etc.) from a more experienced person (mentor) to a younger person (mentee), the coach’s role is not to advice but to lead the coachee to uncover the knowledge and skills wanted.<sup>4</sup>
- *A consultant will advise you on how to drive the car.*  
While consultants provide specific information based on areas of their specialty and provide advice, coaches look at the coachee as the source of problem resolution with the belief that the coachee already has all the knowledge needed, it just needs to be accessed.

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<sup>4</sup>We shall see later on that these characteristics of coaching can be criticised in the light of an intercultural context.

- *A coach will encourage and support you in driving the car.*  
In other words, the coach will help to unleash the coachee's potential to reach his/her objectives.

#### How does interculturality come in and what is intercultural coaching?

Reconnecting to the underlying definition of culture from the previous chapter any encounter between two individuals is intercultural. Coherently thinking this notion through, coaching is always intercultural as well. Nevertheless, in most literature coaching is called intercultural when coach and coachee come from different national-cultural backgrounds or when topics discussed in the sessions are about people moving between national borders.

To grasp the definition of intercultural coaching for this research, I will make use of three different perspectives by Kirsten Nazarkiewicz and Gesa Krämer (2012, 66) that cross-cultural coaching can have and that are used amongst researchers and practitioners.

Coaching can be called intercultural when the aim is to enhance intercultural learning and dexterity in regards to a specific cultural group. Culture is seen as a factor that is active in encounters; a classical example would be an employee is sent to an international assignment to a different country. The coaching is then aiming at enabling the assignee to work effectively in a multicultural surrounding, e.g. a team. Culture here is associated as a rather closed, imaginary entity where individuals are representatives of a culture where language and national culture are the main cultural reference points as to what that culture is. In other words, culture is seen as a static and homogeneous *container*. In the core of this perspective to intercultural coaching it has similarities with the idea of intercultural *trainings*, where country specific knowledge is part of the knowledge acquisition in a coaching session.

Coaching in a multicultural context refers to coachings that take place with individuals or groups that face challenges in a multicultural (work) surrounding. The overall aim is to find communicative and interactive solutions where multicultural aspects are defined as various different cultural aspects; national cultural traits, gender, communication

styles, socialization patterns, power asymmetries, among others. These are active side by side. The objective of the coaching is then to enhance self-reflection of the coachee's own cultural traits in order to constructively work with those in a multicultural context by reflecting upon presuppositions of others and processes. An example could be a pre-school teacher encounters children and parents from diverse cultural backgrounds and faces challenges in this context. Culture is here understood as a multi-faceted dynamic that is active unconsciously in the background in encounters and interactions and serves as a source for solutions.

Transcultural coaching<sup>5</sup> originates from the assumption of cultural differences and discontinuities in every encounter given that every person entails a cultural hybridity.<sup>6</sup> Therefor intercultural challenges are always context related and the aim of transcultural coaching is consequently to reveal cultural traits active in the context, establish and reflect on frames of reference (gender, body, class, race, etc.) to scrutinize intersectionalities inside and outside of the coaching context while unleashing potential. Hence, intercultural competence is the ability to form the process of change in order to create something new. Instead of looking at the present situation, it is a matter of looking at the forces that brought the situation. Transcultural coaching is a transformative learning process for coachee as well as it is for the coach.

As we can see from these definitions, the underlying understanding of the concept of culture informs the definitions of intercultural coaching. Consequently, intercultural coaching in this work is meant as coaching, where *culture* with all its facets acts and is used to enhance the coachee's personal and professional development. Intercultural coaching is understood in line with the idea of transcultural coaching.

I should further mention that in this works' vocabulary the term intercultural coaching entails the ideas of coaching defined as transcultural, however, I will keep using the word *intercultural* to avoid confusion.

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<sup>5</sup> A term mostly used in the non-governmental sector, yet is differently defined here by Nararkiewics and Krämer (2012, 9).

<sup>6</sup> Cultural hybridity refers to poly-identities and multi-group belongings of each human; as we saw on page 9 of this work. Ratje (2007, 262) names this multicollectivity.

The definitions of the different forms of coaching in intercultural settings are only the surface and many other definitions exist. The reason can be seen in how the person using and defining the coaching understands culture, as it's determinative for further definitions. As Geoffrey Abbott (2014, 345) says: "The uncertain nature and practice of cross-cultural coaching reflects the muddiness and wooliness of the concept of culture itself."

### 2.3. The Coaching Relationship

In this chapter I want to outline previous research on the coach-coachee relationship. For this purpose I have not exclusively consulted research dedicated particularly at intercultural coaching or cultural aspects in coaching, but have further included findings from other relationship studies and different coaching forms (e.g. career coaching, executive coaching, skill coaching, etc.) that are relevant to this study. The aim is to understand the factors that play a role in the relationship between coach and coachee, as well as to extract what previous research identifies as *cultural influence* on coaching.

Linguistically I want to use *relationship* and (*work*) *alliance* as equally valuable description of the reciprocate interaction and its establishment between coach and coachee. Knowing that the latter is rather used in the field of psychology and therapy (Gessnitzer and Kauffeld 2015, 179) it shall here broaden the variety of terminological use.

In almost any coaching literature you pick up the relationship between coach and coachee is mentioned to be one of the most essential aspects for a successful and positive development of the coaching. Numerous scholars (Bluckert 2005, 336; Passmore and Fillery-Travis 2011, 78; Boyce et al. 2010, 915; Machin 2010, 37; Gessnitzer and Kauffeld 2015, 178) have identified the relationship as the driving success factor for the outcome as it is the essential vehicle for the coaching. More precisely, the quality of the relationship is essential since it "determines positive outcomes more than technique or theoretical orientation" (Edwards and Graham

2014, 69). Some scholars also claim that adding an intercultural context to the mix annexes another significant challenge (Milner et al. 2013, 26; Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 80).

Peter Bluckert, as a coach practitioner himself, highlights the importance of the coaching relationship by underpinning the need for more attention to this factor in coaching education. He draws insights on what the relationship consists of with the help of the pioneer in client-centred counselling, Carl Rogers, and accordingly states that “unconditional positive regard and acceptance; accurate empathy; congruence/genuineness; and non-possessive warmth” (Bluckert 2005, 337) count as essential prerequisites based on Rogers. While his article particularly addresses executive coaching, there is one aspect that is relevant to highlight for this research: trust. The author mentions two dimensions of trust that are of special importance, which are the trust in integrity and the trust in competence. Trust in integrity means the assurance of confidentiality; trust in competence refers mainly to the professional expertise the coach has. Simon Machin (2010) also highlights that trust is of “paramount importance” (ibid., 43) in the coaching relationship. He researched the internal coaching relationship when the coach comes from the same organization and presumes that a trusting relationship might be even of higher importance in this case. Moreover, the importance of trust was also highlighted in the research done by Wotruba (2016, 101) who researched it in regards to team coachings. Interestingly, this research shows a trust-based relationship is not only important between the coach and the coachees, but also among the coachees of the group. In other words, in team coaching trust is important on an individual and collective level, however, the level of trust may not always be equally intense between coach and all team members. What is noteworthy is that all scholars underscore the importance of trust but don’t touch upon the creators of such. In other words, they aren’t naming the aspects that create trust in the alliance.

Another study carried out investigating the coaching alliance between coach and coachees in transformational coaching and skill coaching delivers interesting insights on the connection between coaching type and relationship strength/depth. Sun, Deane,

Crowe, Andresen, Oades and Ciarrochi found out that transformational coaching, which is a coaching type that is closer related to the therapeutic end of the spectrum, develops a stronger relationship between coach and coachee (Sun et al. 2013, 14). The researchers underline that this finding was shown from the coach as well as from the coachee's perspective. Moreover, skill coaching, which is directed at building the coachee's skill for improved success in his/her current role, is characterized by less engagement and consequently a less deep relationship between coach and coachee. In sum, this study indicates the consideration of the coaching type (and the exploration of 'deep or not-so-deep' topics) and the relationship that is established.

What influence the quality of the matching of coach and coachee has on the relationship was investigated by Boyce, Jackson and Neal (2010). They highlight that the matching indeed has a significant impact on the relationship and consequently on the coaching outcome. The authors claim that the following aspects play a role in the successful matching of the dyad: commonality (including common characteristics such as demographics (race, ethnicity, age, etc.); the experiences of the coach such as personal (hobbies, volunteer experiences, etc.) and professional (education, past work experience, etc.) of coach); compatibility (including behavioural and cognitive preferences of coach and coachee) and credibility (including coaching competence and specialization of coach). When these factors overlap and coach and coachee 'match', the coaching relationship is strong and positive. As additional crucial characteristics of the coach-coachee relationship the authors state rapport, trust and commitment.

While the aforementioned researches pointed out rather general aspects for coaching alliances, Peterson highlights several interesting features for coaching in the cross cultural contexts<sup>7</sup> in his article "Executive Coaching in a Cross-Cultural Context" (2007). The author shows the way in which the assumptions about culture (here national culture) can influence the coaching in a positive, as well as in a negative way. Positive

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<sup>7</sup> The Anglophone term cross-cultural is often understood for the encounter of individuals of different cultural groups, thus, similar to the German equivalent of "interkulturelles Coaching". In this work it is occasionally used as an equivalent to *intercultural* coaching.

is that cultural knowledge may enable the coach to anticipate and handle the coaching, including the relationship establishment (ibid., 270) by, for instance, discovering layers of culture in the individual. As an example, it might help to possibly avoid obvious pitfalls if the coachee does prefer direct or indirect communication. At the same time it might have a negative influence when the coach is implying the cultural knowledge inflexibly to the individual, disregarding the coachee as a unique human being who is shaped by multiple factors and not only by the national group. In this regard the author highlights the need for every coach to be able to personalize the approach to the individual, independent of his/ her (national) culture. A third aspect that this study brought forward was that coaching in an intercultural setting requires a high degree of interpersonal perceptiveness and sensitivity from the coach and from the coachee.

Daniel Pauw's study (2017, 53-54) also shows that some coaches see the influence of culture as very static, while others also see it, but rather connect it with the personality of the coachee than to nationally-bound characteristics. Another takeaway from his study is that the (national) cultural influence might play a role in the beginning of the relationship, yet, diminishes over the evolution of the coaching relationship as personal aspects come to the foreground. Very diverse are also the answers in regards to the importance of culture-specific knowledge about the coachee's culture in his study: some coaches claim it is of predominant importance, others mention that the necessary knowledge is gained throughout the coaching process. The authors conclude that it depends on the standpoint and/or understanding the coach has about culture: coaches with a diverse approach are more flexible and don't see the influence as very strong, coaches with a more essentialist approach to culture rate the importance as high. Another core finding of Pauw's investigation is that coach and coachee establish a common ground for the coaching on which then the relationship can grow (ibid., 56-58). More precisely, this common ground consists of the establishment of a coaching process between coach and coachee, clarification of the expectations (of coach and

coachee) and of the manner of interaction, on which then the relationship grows. The author names this a “creating of a coaching culture”.<sup>8</sup>

One study that has a particular continent focus was carried out by Lina Nangalia and Ajay Nangalia (2010) who looked at the influence of social hierarchy in Asian culture on the coaching relationship. Key takeaways are that the awareness of the “Western cultural ethos” (ibid., 52) in coaching approaches is predominant in the coaching industry around the world (Plaister-Ten 2009, 77-78). Derived from this, the relationship between coach and coachee is defined and highlights principals like ‘a relationship between equals’, ‘no advice-giving from the coach’, ‘coaching proceeding/work and focus on the coachee’s agenda without deep coaching relationship is possible’ and ‘the coachee as a individual actor’ is responsible for his/her life. Furthermore, the authors work out that the perception of social hierarchy may alter significantly the expectations the coachee may have for the coach and the coaching itself. In terms of relationship building in an ‘Asian context’, the study shows that it’s essentially important to have a solid deeper connection to the coachee which might take up to months to establish. Personal, face-to-face contact and the integrity insurance from the coach are thereby of importance. This study finally highlights the need for the local applicability of ‘western’ coaching approaches. The fact that coaching concepts are mainly originated from a ‘western’ perspective is also highlighted by other authors, who remind coaches to reflect upon the concepts and tools they use and if they are aligned with the cultural background of the coachee (Milner et al. 2013, 28-29). Interestingly, both studies mention that coachees occasionally expect the coach to give advice, yet, it seems difficult to address that to only ‘Asian’ coachees as the former study suggest, since also the latter study mentions this ‘issue’ but about coachees from outside the Asian countries.

I was able to access only very few studies where both coaches and coachees were examined about their perception of the coaching relationship, less so studies that

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<sup>8</sup> Translation by K. K lpmann. Original: „Die Schaffung einer gemeinsamen Coachingkultur“ (Pauw 2017, 72).



research this perception in an intercultural context. As suggested in the research carried out by Edwards and Graham (2014) creating a “new normal” (ibid., 70), which is characterised by “establishing ground rules, clarifying the role of the coach, and both client and coach adapting to new behaviors neither of which are solely founded on a single culture” (ibid., 73) may be the best approach to create a relationship between coach and coachee when they identify with different cultural groups. Interestingly, the study showed that coaches establish ground rules for international coachees as well as for national coachees, however, knowledge about cultural norms may help the coach to establish rules for the international coachee. Yet, the study shows that coaches base ‘the new normal’ on their own values, background and assumptions rather than upon the cultural norms of the coachee. Noteworthy is also that coachees seldom have the same level of cultural awareness than the coach and often do not even consider culture as a factor in the coaching prior to the sessions. It can be argued that ‘normal’ is highly perspective depended and that ‘creating a new normal’ between coach and coachee might indeed be fruitful for the relationship.

### **3. How and Why I Did What I Did – Theoretical Approach and Methodology**

In this chapter I will provide all information necessary about the structure, planning and execution of this research. More precisely, I will run the reader through the theoretical understanding for this work and how it determines the whole research outline and execution. In chapter 3.2 I will explain the research design tapping into research question, hypothesis, as well as methodology and methods. Consecutively the reader will find information about the data and the data analysis technique.

Alongside all these aspects I will highlight strengths and weaknesses of such aspects in regards to my research. The aim is furthermore to show openly and with clarity the rationale behind the research design and data analysis for this thesis.

### 3.1. Theoretical Approach – the Understanding of Social Interactions for this Work

“A little promenade into the academic field might turn into a serious hiking trip with winding, steep theoretical routes, slippery and sometimes muddy methodological paths, and suspicious intellectual taverns, offering temporary cognitive (and emotional) accommodation and some "food for thought." This is not only true for students and newcomers in the academic field, attempting their first empirical research project, but also for anyone who leaves the comfort-zone of the own disciplinary research conventions, confronting the "strangeness" of other disciplines and methods.” (Otten and Geppert 2009, chapter 1)

This quote reflects my very personal feelings when diving into the jungle of research work in social sciences, “a field that is constantly growing and becoming less structured” (Flick 2014, 3). After I settled for the fact that this is a normal part of every researcher’s journey, particularly ‘newer’ researchers, I dug into literature to gain clarity.

My turbulences of understanding the pillars of proper scientific work were due to the confusion of terms. I was particularly unclear about the connection between theoretical approach and methodology, since I read that the former determines the methodology as well as research questions (Silverman 2013, 104). As suggested by Silverman the researcher is meant to “reflect upon how theoretical assumptions about the social world are shaping the methodology you favour” (ibid., 104).

Looking at my research I have identified the connection between pillars as such: The understanding of culture, in other words the concept of culture, is strongly connected to the model of the world, thus, the understanding of human interaction underlying for this research – this is mutually depended and therefore works the other way around also. Here I approach human interaction in an interpretivist and constructivist<sup>9</sup> way, meaning that also culture and interculturality is created between actors of cultural groups (see

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<sup>9</sup> The model of constructivism has also been identified as a common approach in intercultural communication research by Otten and Geppert (2009, chapter 1)

definition of culture/interculturality in chapter 2.1). I have come to this conclusion since I want to dedicate my research in the intercultural field to the *new paradigm* in this area. Consequently, the model and framework of reality is strongly connected to these concepts since the concepts are clearly specified ideas from the particular models. In connection to the previously mentioned models and concepts the theories are derived. Theories here are therefore a set of concepts (Silverman 2103, 112). The theories used in this research, through which I seek to define and explain certain phenomena (in my case the relationship building in coaching), are not a pin-pointed theory alone, but I use previous research results from the field and scientific models (e.g. Ratje's cultural cohesion theory (chapter 2.1)) to analyse my results.

Based on the understanding of underlying models, concepts and theories, the research methodology can be determined. It is logical that the methodology for this work is in the area of qualitative research form, more precisely an interview based qualitative research. Interviews are consequently the research method chosen for this work. The methodology alongside the methodological techniques consequently allows the observation, identification and exploration of individuals' experiences, this being two of the main characteristics of qualitative, interview based research work. More information on methodology, data and its reasoning are further explained in the next subchapter. The hypothesis is derived from the theoretical lens through which the data is analysed.

As a small summary of this first part I can conclude that the understanding of culture (concept of culture) determines my theoretical model for this work (interpretivism and constructivism). This again determines the methodological approach – here interview based qualitative research – which then again elucidates the moral rationale of my study.

Having outlined my general understanding of how the different parts of academic research work in the human sciences, I will now fill it with content by explaining each of the pillars for this work briefly. The aim is not to provide exhaustive and highly detailed information, but to provide the necessary information to follow the reasoning behind their use.

### **Interpretivism and Constructivism: the model for this work**

In the area of qualitative research there are many models that provide the underlying framework or theoretical perspective for viewing the reality. To me the amount of ‘-isms’ can be sheer endless and confusing (essentialism, constructivism, rationalism, positivism, neutralism, etc.). For this work I can identify two ‘-isms’ that represent the view of reality as well as they will guide the analysis of the data.

As previously outlined the understanding of culture and interculturality is a decisive factor for the theoretical underpinning for the research. Alongside my understanding that multidimensional facets of a lived experience in human interaction are constructed by individuals and between them, I also chose constructivism as one of the theoretical understandings for this work. “Qualitative research has a unique ability to focus on how people *construct* [emphasis added by author] their behaviour in naturally occurring situations (constructionism)” (Silverman 2014, 27).

Similarly to other scholars (Plaister-Ten 2009, 66; Manning and Kunkel 2014, 1; Wotruba 2016, 99; Morrow 2007, 213), I have noticed that when investigating a topic of such dynamic nature, such as culture or relationship, it also calls for an interpretivist approach. Here, I am very well aware of my role as a researcher, my interpretation of the actual (interview) interaction and when analysing the data.

### **Creating culture: the concept of culture for this work**

The understanding of culture is here to be originated in the *new paradigm* in the field of intercultural research: Culture is not self-evident or structured but created and constructed between individuals that make use of their variety of diverse cultural aspects and create and interpret an intercultural context in the moment. It is an understanding that is derived from a constructivist understanding of human interaction. To not repeat content at this point, please refer to the according chapter of definition of culture and interculturality in this work (2.1).

### **Theoretical lens: theories and previous research**

The research outlined above alongside the concepts and models about culture and interculturality will be the framework from within which I will look at the analysis and

try to answer and discuss the research questions.

### **3.2. Research Design – Research Topic, Questions, Hypothesis, Methodology and Technique**

The topic for this research was found due to personal motivation in the first place. In the grand sphere of intercultural studies – which is in itself an area with seemingly unlimited scope, depending on definition- I wanted to research an area that would help me in my future career. As I have been interested in personal counselling and in human resource development previously, I have chosen the topic coaching, more specifically intercultural coaching. As a requirement of my study programme a Latin American context was given. Due to my personal interest and previous knowledge I have chosen the focus on Mexico and Germany. During my master's degree programme at the University of Helsinki I have been confronted with a different perspective on intercultural encounters and I have discovered that the *context* plays a crucial role in intercultural understanding. Therefore I have given my topic the focus on relationship and relationship building. This also served as a narrowing down of my initial topic. In combination with the fact that relationship building in coaching is very limitedly researched, even less so in a Latin American – European context, this research topic represented an area where novelty to the field of coaching and also intercultural relationships could be gained.

#### **Research Questions**

For this research topic I have identified two research questions, yet, they are not limited to the following: 1) what aspects play a role in the establishment of a relationship between coach and coachee, given that they are from a different cultural background? Coming from my own struggle to understand what it is that makes intercultural encounters 'challenging' (see chapter 1), I look at 2) what, and if, certain aspect of the relationship in coaching can be assigned to national-cultural traits? Can these traits be named and to what extend, and why, do they have an influence of the coaching alliance?

#### **Hypothesis for this work**

As portrayed in the introduction the influence of (national) culture on individual contacts seems to still be a ‘crunch’ question in the field of interculturality with a *modern* cultural understanding. Yet, based on the modern concept and models of culture, the hypothesis is: *There are various aspects that play a role in the relationship building, yet, they cannot be assigned merely to national-cultural traits due to the dynamic nature of relationships and culture.* The hypothesis is the only aspect in an empirical work that can be proven right or wrong, which is the aim for this work.

### **Qualitative research – chosen methodology for this work**

Instead of thinking in polarities of *right* and *wrong* research approaches, I learned that there is rather more or less fitting ways to approach a research topic and question, “mainly following a pragmatic theory of science (the methodology is adequate if it leads to the solution of the research question)” (Mayring 2014, 8). Eventually it was “worth repeating the truism that research methods should be chosen based on the specific task at hand.” (Silverman 2013, 10) Consequently, I decided that the most appropriate form of research for the present topic is indeed qualitative research due to the nature of the research topic: explorative, analytical and interpersonal. Qualitative and quantitative research differs to great extent in the focus and underpinning theoretical framework (positivism, constructionism, etc.) they give to the research. While the latter focuses on numerical and factual results to a research question, qualitative focuses on the phenomena, experience and its meaning of the studied subject. Despite the fact that the intercultural field is lacking quantitative research (Otten and Geppert 2009, chapter 1), it is not surprising since *inter-cultural* is always interpersonal, which is tricky to *measure* in numbers. With a qualitative approach I am hoping to explore the deeper meaning of the social interaction studied in my research, as quantitative methodology would not allow me to do that with the same satisfaction.

### **Interviews as a qualitative technique for this work**

Interviews are one of the most common methods in qualitative research, alongside ethnographic observation and text analysis. For this research a semi-structured interview techniques was chosen for various reasons. Since I aim to identify, explore and understand certain aspects in relationship building through the experiences of

experts in the field, I see interviews as the most suitable method for my research question. As Bridget Byrne (2012, 209) says, it is “particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values. [...] Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees’ views, interpretations of events, understanding, experiences and opinions”. Furthermore, this data collection method allows me to (possibly) direct a conversation into a certain directions and therefore being able to possess information that are relevant for the exploration of the research question. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful because they give an organising structure to the interview in accordance with dimension of the research topic, while they also offer the opportunity for the interviewees to flexibly add to those dimensions. Another reason why I chose this method is because “it creates openings for narrative to unfold, while also including questions formed by theory.” (Galletta 2012, 2) Furthermore, as mentioned previously, I wanted to build my personal network and I have experienced that meeting people face-to-face, even if only virtually, helps to stay connected, as the connection is already somewhat more personal than through survey or observations, for example.

### 3.3. The Data

#### **Access to studied group and interviewees**

For this research I was searching for five German coaches that are or have been working with Mexican coachees, and five Mexican coaches that are or have been working with German coachees. Thus, the aim was to have ideally ten interviewees, yet, I was able to only interview two German coaches and three Mexican coaches with this particular profile. Initially I limited my search also on coaches that specifically stated that they are working as *intercultural coaches*, nevertheless, I soon realised that this decreased the amount of coaches with the profile I was looking for even more. Consequently, I accepted all people that said they are coaches as long as they had the country profile I was looking for.

I gained access to the studied group through social media, mainly LinkedIn and Xing.

Establishing the network took significant time, yet, I didn't start from zero but already had some people in the network mostly from intercultural conferences and previous work positions. I deliberately used these media because I noticed their importance as a professional platform for coaches and in general. I entered around 11 thematic groups on LinkedIn to search for suitable candidates and to post my reach-out pitch and small presentation.<sup>10</sup> I also found and contacted around 30 coaches with eligible profiles for this research. Furthermore, similar to a snowball method, coaches that agreed to participate as an interviewee put me in contact with more coaches, of whom not all had suitable profiles, yet were useful in order to get in touch with people that did have. I carried out two background interviews of which none were considered as data for this study but helped me to understand my topic and the research area better.

In addition, I was in touch with the president of International Coach Federation (ICF<sup>11</sup>) Finland, who put me in contact with the presidents of ICF Germany and ICF Mexico. Through them a short presentation and call for participants was sent out via Email to the whole network of coaches in the two countries. No responses came back from this initiative.

Despite these efforts to find interviewees I was only able to get five coaches to participate in my research. I believe the reasons for that is twofold and connected. Most of the people in the intercultural field, particularly in the coaching business, are freelancers, meaning that they have concepts, approaches and knowledge that are not protected and that they are consequently not willing to share with their competitors. In relation to that, working time is flexible but at the same time very valuable: Time is money for a self-employed coach.<sup>12</sup> One German coach agreed to answer my questions but informed that it would only be possible via written correspondence as he/she had very limited extra time outside his/her work. Unfortunately, my following-up after providing the questions was unsuccessful because the coach never came back to me

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<sup>10</sup> One background interviewee recommended to *sell* my study to gain more participants.

<sup>11</sup> As of February, 26 2018, ICF's website stated that ICF is "the world's largest organization of professionally trained coaches" (<https://coachfederation.org/about/>).

<sup>12</sup> This was also mentioned as in the research done by Sue Wotruba (2016, 100), who confirms that coaches are often short on time.



with the answers. In sum, these two aspects I hold responsible for the little participation along with the fact that the profile of coaches I was looking for was very specific. Interestingly, I found more Mexican coaches to participate in my study than German coaches, even though the overall number of coaches based on nationality is a lot smaller for Mexico than Germany (Bresser 2009, 32, 130).

### **Participants:**

<b>Coach ID, gender, age (in years)</b>	<b>Coaching type (certification institute) – named by research participants</b>
ID 1: male, German, 49	Systemic coach, ontological coaching (Neuland und Partner)
ID 2: female, German, 47	Intercultural coach (interculture e.V.; dvct e.V)
ID 3: female, Mexican, 35	Coach (the international profiler)
ID 4: female, Mexican, 41	Intercultural trainer and coach (dgikt e.V)
ID 5: female, Mexican, 40	Consciousness coach (actp, consciousness coaching academy)

### **The interview: Interviewee form [appendix 1], questions and categories, recording and transcription**

I have guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of all the interaction between the participants and me. This is in line with the ethical research criteria (Silverman 2013, 164). It was fortunate to not have encountered any ethical issues (as an example, an interviewee could reveal ethically incorrect traits during the interview) during the research, neither during the data collection period nor during any other time of the research. Furthermore, I have assured the opening of the interview by stating the purpose of the research and clarifying the interviewees right to answer or not, among other aspects, which is identified as relevant for the opening and creating space for semi-structures interviews (Galletta 2012, 47).

### **Interview questions and categories**

Since I had deductively shaped the categories prior to the interview execution, I had posed all questions with a specific intention. In other words, I deducted the question from the categories. The main categories I deducted from previous research namely the research done by Daniel Pauw (2017). The questions were open-ended to leave room for narrative and points that the researcher could ask about more specifically during the interview.

In the beginning I had an introductory question to familiarize the interviewee with the topic of the interview as well as for me to observe and understand the narrative the interviewee has about the research topic. I followed a certain structure when conducting the interviews with an interview guideline [appendix 2], yet it is different to what Galletta (2012, 45-53) recommends. Instead of leaving certain types of re-assuring questions to the concluding part of the interview, I agreed upon start to ask questions when I felt further information and narratives could be gained/explained at certain points during the interview. I also flexibly jumped between the categories when the coach already mentioned an aspect that would come at a later stage according to the interview guideline but fitted the moment better. This allowed a flowing conversation-like interview with a relaxed atmosphere. The categories were language, trust, time, critical incidents and cultural awareness. To none of these categories I gave definitions or further explanations, unless asked for by the interviewee, to grasp the understanding of each coach about these categories. For example, I was hoping to understand what they understood as a critical incident by the answer they would provide. At the end I posed a recapitulation question asking what the coach sets out to be the most important aspects in the relationship building to his/her German/Mexican coachee. I posed this question intentionally to be able to draw comments on the possible change between opening and recapitulation question as well as to be able to let the interviewee summarize the interview in his/her own words.

To some extent it might have been more fruitful to be aware of the interviewer–interviewee reciprocity of the intervention as then the flow of the interview might not have been interrupted or changed, as well as that the direction of the interview might

have taken a different turn (Galletta 2012, 76).

### **Recordings**

All interviews were carried out via Skype between November 2016 and June 2017, one interview was repeated several months later because of a sound distortion in the first recording. Skype was chosen due to the geographic distance between interviewee and researcher. All interviews were recorded with a recorder and a mobile phone and saved to a media cloud. Depending on the preferences of the coach the interview was carried out in Spanish, German or English. Three interview guidelines exist accordingly [appendix 2a-c]. The comparatively large time period of the data collection was partially due to the elevated difficulties of finding suitable candidates, and also due to the time restrictions of the researcher.

### **Transcription**

Since I do not focus on linguistic aspects in my analysis, such as in discourse analysis for example, I have not transcribed all sound particles (“mhm”, “ah”, etc.), yet, I have done a quite literal transcription [appendix 3]. Being well aware that all transcription mean a loss of information (Mayring 2014, 45), I have chosen a “clean read and verbatim transcription” (ibid., 45) reducing most utterances to have a smooth and simple to understand text.

## **3.4. Qualitative Content Data Analysis – Thematic Text Analysis**

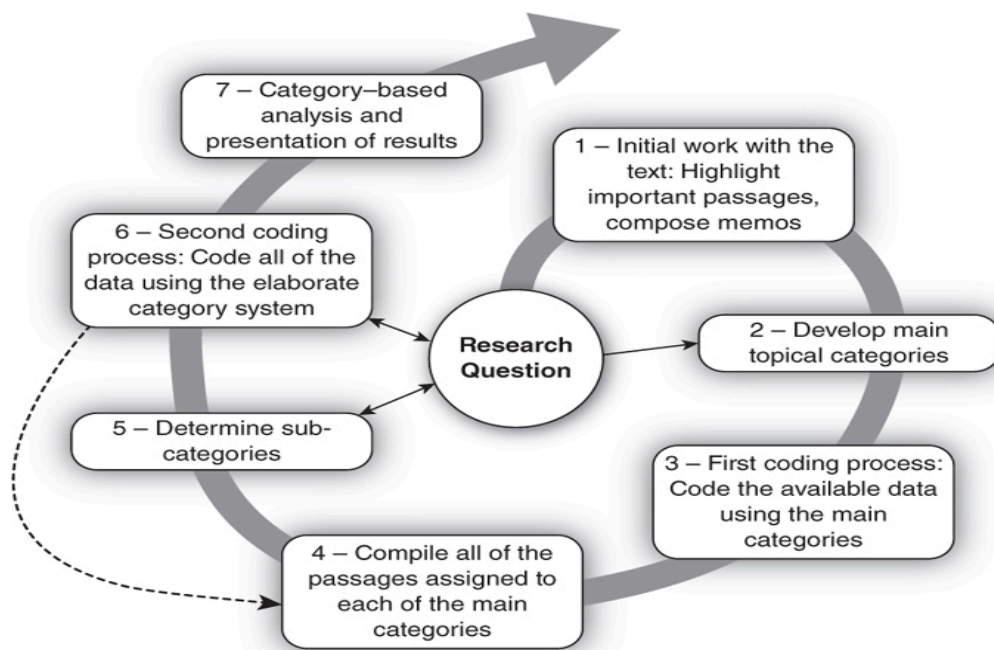
“A tangible and concrete method for analysing qualitative data is not easy to find.”  
(Kuckartz 2014, 7)

This quote represents yet again my difficulties to find a tangible and applicable method for the analysis of my data. I consequently decided to base my data analysis approach of the practises other researchers applied, yet adjusted it to what came naturally logical to me for my research. There are two main scholars that I based my analysis approach on, one is Philipp Mayring and the other one is Udo Kuchartz. Mayring (2014, 12) helped me to understand why categories are useful, how to build them and how to make

qualitative data more structured, workable and tangible; Kuckartz (2014, 70) was very useful to get an actual instruction of how to practically do the analysis (picture 2) and what are the main points in common and differences in the analyses existent in the qualitative research sphere. Before I present my analysis report where I outline the steps I undertook for analysing the data, I shall briefly state the rationale behind the analytical method and why I didn't use others.

(Cultural) Discourse analysis might be another suitable option to explore and analyse the data for this research, yet, given the limited research amount existing for this topic as well as the fact that my research questions is addressing a 'what' question, I chose qualitative content analysis as a method to analysis the data. Nevertheless, I acknowledge the nature of cultural research where the subject is in constant flux (Otten and Geppert 2009, chapter 1) and consequently give credit to it by approaching this research from an interpretivist stance. Grounded theory I did not hold useful since the objective for this research is not to develop a theory but to identify aspects.

In regards to the strategy I applied when analysing the data, I used a deductive category building technique. I also added subcategories inductively during the analysis process. In practise, I worked with Microsoft Excel to code and summarize the data. Against my initial plan to use QCAmap software by Mayring for the content analysis, I decided Excel could be user friendlier, as efficient as QCAmap and it would bring personal additional value to broaden my skills using that programme.



Picture 2: Thematic Qualitative Text Analysis Process (Kuckartz 2014, 70)

### **Analysis report**

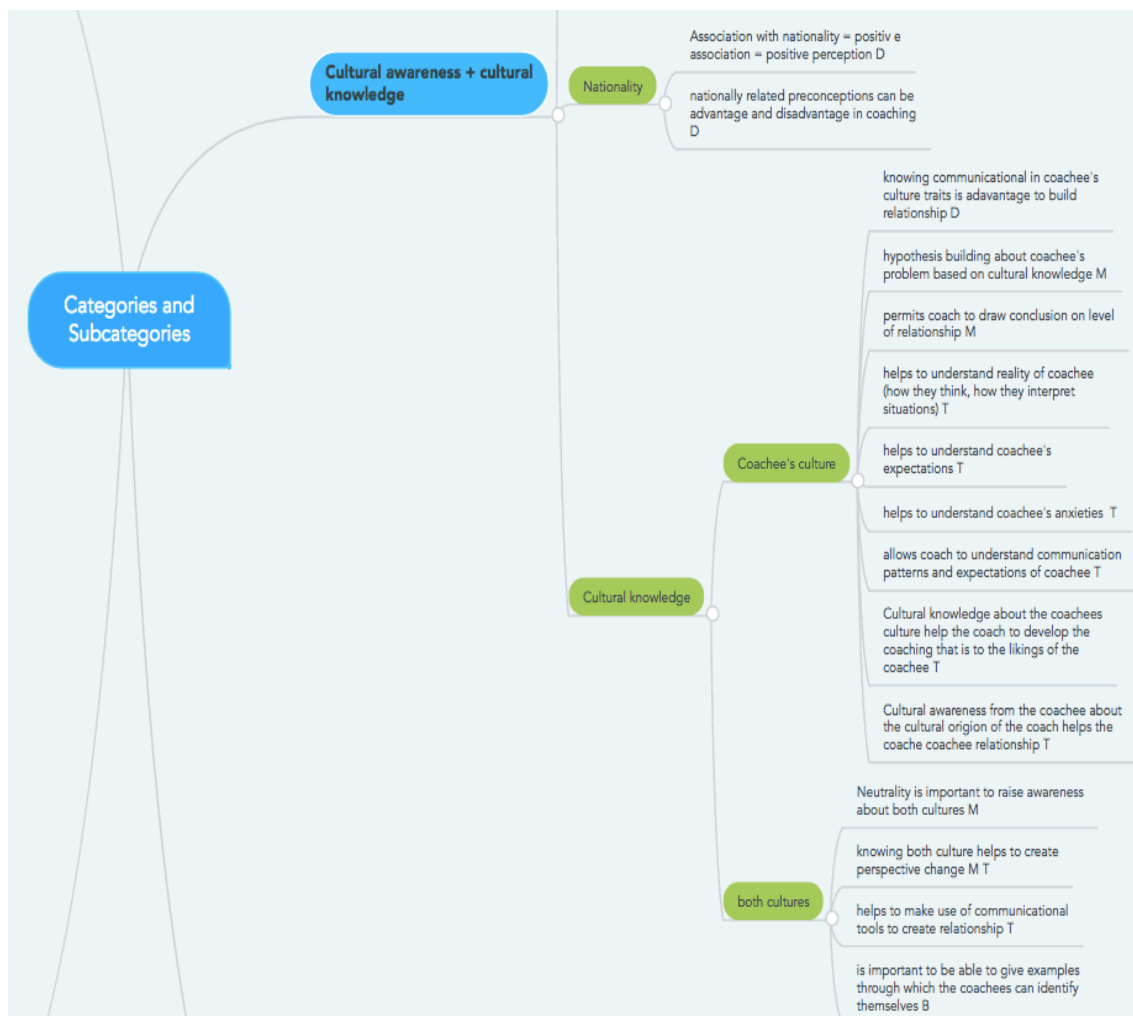
Every category including the opening and recapitulation category/question had an own sheet in one Excel document (picture 3). I gave each interviewee an interviewee ID randomly to identify them during the analysis, if needed. Following, I went through the transcriptions and assigned all phrases and paragraphs to the according category in the sheets, in other words, I coded the data. Consequently, my coding units were phrases or entire paragraphs that contained one or various ideas to a topic of relevance in the category. Some codes were assigned to more than one category. As a next step I created the coded data, meaning that I extracted the essential idea of each code through text reduction and paraphrasing. At this point I created the coded data in the original language to avoid falsification due to translation at this point. Given that the entire transcriptions were coded, except less relevant parts of the interview mostly containing laughs or other verbal irrelevances, I also wrote memos to some text passages in this round of coding. The memos were to keep track of ideas regarding concepts and theories that came to me while reading the data.

Inspired by Mayring as well as suggested by Kuckartz, I went through the coded data with two objectives. Firstly, I wanted to reduce further in order to extract the main point of each code. Since I have two research questions I wanted to extract a general statement, which was easy because most coaches spoke in a general manner about their experiences, even though I specifically asked about the German-Mexican context. Furthermore, whenever possible, I extracted a statement about the Mexican-German context. Secondly, given that the coded data was still in Spanish or German, I wrote the second coding round in English to be able to work with it with greater ease when writing up my findings and analysis.

	A	B	C	D
1		Question (and coding units)	Coded data (through reduction of text/paraphrasing)	
2	Repondent ID		first coding	second coding
3	1	Wie nehmen Sie den Beziehungsaufbau im interkulturellen Coaching wahr, wenn Coach und Coachee nicht den selben kulturellen Hintergrund haben? / <b>How have you experienced the relationship building in intercultural coaching when your client is not from the same cultural background as you?</b>	Das Investieren von Zeit um sich Kennenzulernen ist wichtig. Beziehungsaufbau	<b>General level:</b> The relationship building between coach and coachee requires time, which is important to consider.
4	2	also ich empfinde das als sehr wichtig erst mal da so eine Vertrauensbasis aufzubauen, die nicht so rein sachlich und objektive, sachlich wenn du's so willst, wie ich das beispielsweise mit deutschen Klienten erlebe. Ne? Da ist war Beziehungsaufbau auch wichtig, aber da geht man sehr schnell in tiefere Bereiche. In Mexiko fängt das erstmal oberflächlich an, da muss man erstmal Vertrauen aufbauen; da ist das nicht gleich so gegeben wie ich das hier erlebe.	In Mexiko ist es wichtig eine vertrauensbasis schaffen, die nicht rein sachlich ist. In Mexiko fängt man oberflächlich an und Vertrauen muss aufgebaut werden. Bei deutschen Coachees wird die Vertrauensbasis durch sachliche Kriterien geschaffen. Bei der Arbeit mit deutschen Coachees ist Beziehungsarbeit auch wichtig, aber man geht sehr schnell in tiefere Bereiche. Bei der Arbeit mit deutschen Coachees ist Vertrauen von Anfang an gegeben.	<b>Mex (Ger about Mx):</b> Relationship building with mexican coachees starts on the surface and trust has to be established. <b>Ger (Ger about Ger):</b> The relationship with German coachees is characterized by trust from the beginning due to official criteria of the coaching and the relationship can move to deeper levels fast. <b>General level:</b> The relationship between coach and coachee depends on the level of trust, which is different at the beginning of a coaching process depending on the nationality of the coachee.
5		Ähm, also geht's auch darum, das vielleicht zu vergleichen mit der deutschen Brille oder ?oder sozusagen gegenüber deutschen Klienten vielleicht?	<b>Note:</b> Kulturvergleichs-Ansatz	<b>Katharina Külpmann:</b> "die Mexikaner"
6		Also ich denke mal dass eben im Kontaktaufbau mit den <b>Mexikanern</b> einmal so small talk persönlicher, persönliche Themen eine große Rolle	Beim Kontaktaufbau zu Mexikanern ist Small-Talk wichtig. Persönliche Themen spielen eine große Rolle. Der deutsche	<b>Mex (Ger about Mx):</b> To build a relationship to mexican coachees small talk about personal topics from coach and coachee is important. <b>Ger (Ger about Ger):</b> The relationship building to german coachees is
<div> <div>Opening question</div> <div>Language</div> <div>Trust</div> <div>Time</div> <div>Critical Incidents</div> <div>Awareness of Culture</div> <div>Closing (Recap) ques</div> </div>				

Picture 3: Data coding in Microsoft Excel

As a next step I created a mind map where I grouped the final codes into possible subcategories (picture 4). I chose MindMeister mind maps to create a free mind map because this tool helped me to make sense of the still quite large data amount to identify main findings. Instead of copying all final codes into the mind map I tried to pin down even further the essence of each coded data, which would sometimes be a key word such as empathy, for example. Following, I downloaded the mind map as a text document and was able to write down my findings structurally.



Picture 4: Extract of the mindmap created to group coded data

The findings identified from my data were analysed drawing parallels and divergences to theory and previous research in the field. In practise, I organised my analysis

chapter not by subcategories but in three main topics that successively develop the answer to the research questions.

## **4. What to Consider When Building a Coaching Relationship? Findings and Analysis**

The research findings and their analysis shall no longer be structures along the interview categories, but the results from different categories will be combined and interrelated, which also gives them validation (Silverman 2013, 360). The subchapters are successively built up for the reader to be provided with the findings on one hand, and with the analysis that will lead to the discussion and conclusion on the other hand. Each subchapter has a small introduction and conclusion; the findings are supported or contradicted by previous research results from other scholars or theory whenever possible, if not, I intend to state the reason for that. Chapter 4.1 aims predominantly at the provision of research findings, the demonstration of contradicting results, and only occasionally, whenever possible, confirmations and contradictions with theories and other research is done. Derived from this demonstration, thoughts on the construct of relationship, the connection between coaching type and relationship and the coaching profession shall be highlighted. In chapter 4.2 the reader will discover the subjectivity of the evaluation of cultural influence on the coaching alliance. In the last subchapter the modern cultural understanding is shown through research findings that demonstrate a reciprocal construction of the coaching culture and relationship.

All translations into English have been done by the author to the best of her abilities. The original quotes in Spanish or German are located in the footnote.

### **4.1. Aspects that Play a Role in the Relationship Between Coach and Coachee**

With the help of the interview guideline I asked five coaches about their experiences in



regards to the aspects that play a role when establishing a relationship to the coaching client. In this chapter I shall outline the main aspects that were mentioned by the research participants in regards to trust, language and time. When stating the results of those categories, other aspects come to the foreground that can be seen as factors for the coaching relationship and consequently are additional results. Moreover, I will discuss contradictions and detectable points of the actual interview results/data. Besides the just-mentioned objectives I will provide some points of departure for further analysis that is to come in chapter 4.2 and 4.3, followed by a small summary of the subchapter.

All coaches underline the high importance of trust for the coach-coachee relationship which is in accordance with other research in the field (Bluckert 2005, 339; Machin 2010, 40). Two (ID1, ID3) out of five coaches mention that through trust it's possible that the coachee opens up, which means that the coachee feels safe, talks about the topics he/she brought to the coaching openly and is open to coaching techniques. Additionally ID1 says that trust brings coaching to a deeper level. One coach (ID2) states that the level of trust in the relationship between coach and coachee influences the coaching outcome. Another coach (ID4) claims that creating trust is the aim of coaching overall. The "paramount importance" (Machin 2010, 43) of trust is seen across most reviewed literature and matches the first research result.

Yet, the intention of this research is not only to find out the important of certain aspects of the coaching relationship, but of what these aspects consist. In other words, which aspects create trust, what tools are used and how the coaches identify trust in the relationship. I will outline the results my research brought forward and link them to theory and literature if possible. If there is no previous works that identify the same aspects, I intend to analytically provide the reason for that.

One coach states two aspects that help for trust to be established between coach and coachee: One is the aspect of mutual *sympathy*, the other is *professional expertise*. Both aspects I came across in papers. ID 2 states that sympathy is the degree to which coach and coachee find each other sympathetic on a personal level– this has been particularly

stated by one German coach when working with Mexican clients. Boyce, Jackson and Neal's research (2010, 915-917) on the coaching alliance uncovered similar results. It underlines the right matching between coach and coachee, where common characteristics, personal and professional interests and credibility are important. Sympathy is an even 'softer' component but can possibly rank in the same group of aspects. Additionally, the *professional expertise* of the coach can create trust on the coachee's side. Bluckert (2005, 339) also mentions trust in professional expertise but adds another aspect that was not found explicitly in this research's data: the trust in integrity. However, all practitioners highlighting the importance of creating a safe space can be seen as their commitment to integrity. The establishment of a *coaching framework*, meaning the clear communication of the coaching expectations and limitations from coach and coachee's side as well as clarifying the equality between coach and coachee, help to generate trust for the relationship, states coach ID5.

Another aspect that creates trust is *identification*, as I call it. Three out of five coaches mention this aspect; yet, it has various meanings and levels, which will become clearer with the information the coaches provide. ID1 indicates that finding similarities between coach and coachee makes both able to identify with one another and therefore creates trust. Furthermore, the coachee's ability to identify with the (personal) experiences that the coach him-/herself lived and that are similar to the experiences the coachee is living/has lived is an important aspect to create trust through which the relationship develops. Similarly ID3 reveals that giving the coachee a chance to identify with other people's experiences creates affinity and therefore trust in the relationship. Consequently, there are various points where coach and coachee can (mutually) identify; these *identification points*, as I will call them, may be personal between coach and coachee (e.g. both are married), experiential (e.g. both have lived in a certain country) or identification points where the coachee can identify with other people's experiences (e.g. other expatriates in the same company). In chapter 4.3 I will come back to this aspect in the coaching relationship. *Nationality* is another trust-creating factor that is mentioned by two coaches (ID1, ID5); one of them specifies that this is also an aspect outside of the coaching context but it has an effect on coaching as well. This point I will pick up for analysis in chapter 4.2.

Coach ID3 names the effect of *formal and informal communication* on the creation and level of trust, particularly in German clients. Furthermore he/she says the *degree of openness of a coachee* that can influence the level of trust between the interacting parties. In regards to this ID3 highlights the need for the coach's *skill* of asking the right questions at the right time to establish more trust. Two out of five coaches (ID1, ID3) also mention the importance of speaking the *coachee's mother tongue* in coaching as a factor that creates trust from the coachee's side. Linking this to a following paragraph about the influence of language on the coaching relationship, we will see that speaking the language of the coachee enhances the level of trust, however, the coach might have disadvantages in the efficient use of the language for the coaching process.

In regards to tools that coaches use to create trust the findings are similarly diverse. So it is that two coaches stress to "be authentic": "the only thing I can tell you is that the best tool is to be authentic"<sup>13</sup> (ID5) and "being human"<sup>14</sup> (ID4) is used as a tool to create trust. In this regard ID4 highlights the power of talking about personal experiences that the coachee can relate to in order to establish trust. This can be seen as creating *identification points*, as mentioned above. Furthermore ID5 mentions that creating a *safe space* is a tool that helps to establish the trust in the coach-coachee relationship, which the coaches also mention as an aspect that should be existing in the coaching to be able to create trust. At this point I would like to stress that being able to mutually identify creates trust as well as it is a tool to create trust. Similarly it behaves with the safe space: a safe space is needed for elevated trust, but it is a tool at the same time to create the trust. This is potentially a challenging task for the building of the relationship, as it seems to be a vicious circle: you need one thing (for example a safe space in the coaching session) without which the other (trust) cannot be established, but that one thing is at the same time the tool (to create a safe space) through which you can only establish it.

Two coaches (ID1, ID3) state that knowing the *humour* in a country and making use of it with the coachees helps to create trust due to the feeling of belonging that is created - when correctly used. One coach contradicts him/herself slightly when saying that using

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<sup>13</sup> "lo único que te puedo decir es que la mejor herramienta [...] es siendo auténtica"

<sup>14</sup> "y también soy humana"

the local Mexican humour helps to be accepted and connected to the Mexican coachees, but at the same times states that it is an indication of a low level of trust when the conversation between coach and coachees is rich in jokes, discussions and superficial talk. Once the coach can identify a rising level of trust making use of *communicational tools*, such as supportive sentences, can generate more trust. In sum, the tools that coaches use to enhance the level of trust seem to be as tricky and difficult to pin down just as the ability to identify trust as a factor in the coaching relationship.

How coaches know when trust is established are rather diverse opinions and predominantly intangible indicators. Two out of five (ID1, ID3) state that trust is primarily a feeling that the coach has during the coaching sessions with the coachee and that the atmosphere helps to indicate the level of trust existing. Furthermore, they both specify that the coachee's opening-up is an indication that trust has been established and/or is growing. In this regard, ID1 additionally mentions attentiveness as a crucial factor to identify trust in the relationship. Relatedly, coach ID5 indicates that the topics the coachee touches upon signalise the level of trust and mentions that the deeper the topics go, the more trust is established in the relationship. Another coach (ID2) highlights the *body language* of the coachee and the adaptation of communication styles between coach and coachee as an indicator of the existing level of trust, based on the neuro-linguistic programming (NLP<sup>15</sup>) approach. In contrast, he/she mentions that the quantity of conversation taking place in coaching sessions might be an indication of trust, depending on the cultural background of the coachee. This point I will address more closely in chapter 4.2. In sum, it can be said that a diversity of aspects and tools that create trust is evident, as well as their interdisciplinarity. So, for instance, it shows that creating a safe space and the consequential opening-up of the coachee is a necessary aspect that has to exist for trust-creation, a tool to create trust as well as an indicator of existing trust.

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<sup>15</sup> For more information on neuro-linguistic programming in coaching, or NLP coaching, see McDermott (2010). However, further explication of this coaching type at this moment is irrelevant for the analysis and would not lead an added value.

As another main influencer in the coaching relationship all coaches stress the importance of language. Three (ID2, ID4, ID5) out of five coaches indicate an overall influence of language on coaching and the coaching relationship. Most generally ID5 states that the essence of coaching is communication itself and therefore language plays a vital role:

“I definitely consider the language as an important key factor because it is the tool through which we communicate. And in coaching everything that we speak is super important, not what we hear, but what we speak about in the coaching process.”<sup>16</sup>

ID2 says: “I believe that the language has an influence on the behaviour of a person [coachee]”<sup>17</sup>, which shows the influential reach of language. Furthermore, he/she claims that language influences the communication style of humans, which is also supported by ID 4.

All coaches interviewed for this research mention the use of mother tongue and foreign tongue in coaching and its effect on the relationship. Yet, what is noteworthy is that they mention the language in different contexts: while some refer to mother tongue as the native language of the coachee, others mention it in regards to their own native language; coherently so with the use of foreign language.

Two coaches explain the effect of the use of the *mother tongue of the coach* in coaching: there is more intensity in coaching when the coach can speak in the native tongue and can use the language in a more elevated manner. One coach goes as far as saying that coaching in a language that is not on native level might have a negative influence on the coaching process:

“It is definitely important and this is one of the reasons why I don’t conduct coachings in German for the time being, at least not on a face-to-face level yet.

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<sup>16</sup> “Entonces, definitivamente considero que el idioma es un factor clave e importante, porque es la herramienta con la nos estamos comunicando. Y en el coaching es súper importante todo lo que hablamos, no lo que escuchamos, sino lo que hablamos en ese proceso.”

<sup>17</sup> “Ja, weil ich glaube schon auch dass Sprache das Verhalten beeinflusst.”

Because obviously the language has an important influence on how the coaching develops.”<sup>18</sup> (ID5)

Four out of five coaches explain the effect of the use of the *mother tongue for the coachee* on the coaching relationship. The effects are claimed to be that the coachee can express him-/herself with more ease which allows greater fluidity in the coaching conversations and therefore larger intensity; greater depth for the coaching when using coachee’s native tongue; greater comfort and tranquillity for the coachee in the coaching sessions as well as security to be able to express oneself to the extent that the coachee would like. As an example, ID 4 narrates:

“I believe it is important that they can communicate in their language because the majority of people that come don’t have a sufficient level of Spanish. Also, speaking in a different language often can cause that you can’t express yourself in the same way. So, a coaching like this [in the coachee’s mother tongue] gives them more comfort and more range to exactly say what they want to say. Also you avoid misunderstandings that can sometimes occur due to the language.”<sup>19</sup>

An overall improvement of the coaching relationship due to the use of the coachee’s mother tongue is mentioned. In accordance with that, negative effects of foreign language use for the coachee are explained; factors like elevated difficulty for the coachee, created distance between coach and coachee, less precise expression from coachee and a lack of information might occur. This is regarded with a negative influence on the relationship because the personal connection is missing.

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<sup>18</sup> “Definitivamente es importante y es una de las razones también por las que yo no me dedico de lleno de trabajar con coachees alemanes, al menos no al nivel individual, por lo pronto. Porque obviamente el idioma tiene un impacto muy importante en cómo se va desarrollando una sesión coaching.”

<sup>19</sup> “Yo creo que es importante poder comunicarse, que ellos se puedan comunicarse en su idioma, porque la mayoría de las personas que vienen no tienen el nivel suficiente, bueno del español de por sí. Pero también comunicarse en otro idioma muchas veces no puedes expresar lo mismo. Entonces un coaching así a ellos les da más comodidad, les da más amplitud, para exactamente decir lo que quieren. Y se evitan malos entendidos que a veces por el idioma pueden surgir.”

“And then I also believe that there is a certain distance because the connection to the heart of the language is missing. They then stay relatively objective.”<sup>20</sup> (ID1)

Moreover, the interviewees mention elevated risk of misunderstanding and less fluidity for the coaching process as effects of foreign language use in coaching.

Noteworthy is that the use of the native tongue has significant importance for the coach and the coachee. Given that in most intercultural encounters people with different mother tongues meet, the language is highly likely to be foreign to one of them. In coaching, as established above, the positive and negative effects of speaking a mother or foreign tongue, respectively, are the same for coach and coachee. In other words, the coach has a disadvantage when speaking the language of the coachee, the coachee has a disadvantage when speaking the language of the coach, and likewise both have an advantage when they speak their mother tongue.

One possible solution would be that both agents speak a foreign language and one coach has mentioned this option:

“But I have worked in English with coachees that wasn’t their native tongue. I mean, both of us were using a foreign language. [*How did that go?*] Super good. In the case that it was a foreign language for both of us there haven’t been any problems because the level is very similar, so there is an understanding that we are communicating on the same level.”<sup>21</sup> (ID5)

The use of lingua franca for both coachee and coach generate a sense of being on the same level and thus equality between coach and coachee. Power distances between coach and coachee might be eliminated.

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<sup>20</sup> “Aber dann, glaube ich auch, bleibt dann auch eine gewisse Distanz da, weil dann auch der Bezug zum Herzen zu dieser Sprache dann fehlt. Dann sind die sehr, die bleiben dann relativ sachlich.”

<sup>21</sup> “Pero he trabajado en ingles con coachees que su idioma no era su lengua materna. O sea, los dos estamos usando como una lengua extranjera. [...] Súper bien. [...] en el casos que para los dos es el idioma extranjera no habido ningún problema porque el nivel es muy similar y entonces hay un entendimiento que nos estamos comunicando en un nivel similar.”

In connection with associations of lingua franca in coaching, there is another interesting aspect: One coach (ID1) shares that speaking native level Spanish without a foreign accent has created trust in the coachees because they feel the coach belongs to them and his/her credibility as a coach for that cultural area is given. In contrast to this, one other (ID4) coach narrates that speaking with an accent in the coachee's native language creates authenticity and might charm the coachee because the coach is from another country and credibility about his/her knowledge about that country is 'proven' by the nationality and accent.

Yet another factor that coaches state as a relevant aspect for the relationship is time. I particularly wanted to find out how the coaches perceive time in the relationship building between coach and coachee, as well as understand the development of the relationship over the coaching period(s). Three (ID1, ID4, ID 5) out of five coaches claim that the relationship improves and/or deepens over time. Time also seems to play a role for establishing trust, since two coaches touch on the topic of *time* in this process: ID1 mentions that some people generally establish trust faster than others, likewise, coach ID5 explains that how fast people open up depends on the individual. ID1 furthermore mentions that time is an important factor in the development and evolution of the relationship, particularly when working with clients from diverse backgrounds or in groups, similarly, coach ID2 states that time in regards to relationship is culturally related and it depends on such how long it takes to build a relationship between coach and coachee. In ID2's words:

“Mexicans, or Mexican culture, is one where they open up and connect relatively quickly. I don't know, you probably know the coconut and mango, sometimes also referred to as peach, model of culture. But exactly that behaviour to be open and speak about private matters to strangers is quite normal in Mexico. This is why it is relatively easy, especially when you admit to it and also open up, to establish a good relationship.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “die Mexikaner, oder die mexikanische Kultur, ist ja eine, wo man relativ schnell sich öffnet und andockt. Ich weiß nicht, sie kennen vielleicht das Modell von Kokosnuss und der Mango, was auch mit Pfirsich benutzt wird, aber dieses Verhalten eben, offen, und



This quote exemplifies characteristics based on cultural models about cultural groups. Here, ‘the Mexicans’ are characterized as a member of a cultural group with analogues of a mango or a peach (Trompenaars 2013, chapter About peaches and coconuts). I will get to this point in chapter 4.2 again, while I would like to make one other observation here. What this model suggests is that the people characterised as members of peach *culture* are easy to talk to, are happily accepting informal language use (e.g. first name) and share some personal information. However, it suggests that it is hard to get into the core where the real personal information lies. The opposite is suggested for people belonging to coconut *cultures*, who are hard to talk to in the beginning, provide personal information very superficially and stay quite formal. Once the relationship evolves the hard shell cracks and the personal information reveals. When the analogue is done for Mexican coachees, I wonder how *deep* the relationship is when the core is hard to access. However, the coach claims it is easy to connect with Mexicans because they are easy to *access* or *talk to*. Consequently, I dare to wonder if it is the same level of relationship that the coaches talk about. Some people interpret an existing relationship with the pure fact of having a conversation; others might interpret an existing relationship when the conversation is about really personal matters. Consequently, I pose following questions: Is an ‘existing’ relationship the same as a ‘good’ relationship? What means ‘a deep relationship’ in this regard? It leads me to wonder what and when can we speak of ‘relationship’? Based on the analysis here it is a very subjective opinion. The subjectivity of interpretations will also come evident later on in the analysis of the data.

Time is also perceived in a different manner and consequently contrasts the position the previous coaches have: two coaches (ID3, ID5) state that the time factor is relative and it depends on the coachee and how fast he/she is opening up.

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vielleicht auch gleich über private, persönliche Dinge mit eigentlich Fremden zu sprechen, das ist ja in Mexiko sehr normal. Deswegen ist es relative einfach am Anfang, wenn man sich darauf einlässt, und vor allem selber auch offen ist, da eine gute Beziehung aufzubauen.”

“It [time] is very relative. I mean, it is relative because for some people it is difficult to open up and other open up quickly. Sooner or later all my clients open up. [...] But again, it is relative because it depends on the person.”<sup>23</sup> (ID5)

I will come back to the different perceptions and interpretations of influences in chapter 4.2.

What is noteworthy is that the coaching periods of the coaches have all been very different. One coach has mentioned that the shorter the overall coaching period, the faster the coaching relationship has to be established. Another coach explains that continuity is assured by regular sessions to minimize the risk of losing the red thread in the coaching:

“I recommend that it [the coaching] has seminal sessions, or maximum, a session every two week. I don’t recommend that more than two weeks pass because you lose the moment and the red thread, especially as a coach.”<sup>24</sup> (ID5)

One coach indicated to have a period between eight and ten months during which he/she has seen the coachees in coaching sessions that lasted for one day each. In total the coaching duration was 12 days. The coachings were done in groups. Another interviewed practitioner states the duration of his/her coachings between one and five sessions usually, however, how long these sessions last is not commented in the interview. Yet another coach narrates that one coaching session has the duration of four hours and that after this session there are group sessions for those coachees that are interested. Depending on the coachee, the sessions can be between three to five sessions or last up to one or two days, states another coach. In contrast, another coach indicates that the coaching process has a minimum of three months with regular session, and a maximum of six months.

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<sup>23</sup> “Pues, es que es muy relativo. O sea, es relativo en como te dije hace rato que hay gente que le cuesta menos trabajo abrirse o se abre más rápido que otra, tarde o temprano, todos mis clientes se abren. [...] Este, pero es relativo porque también depende mucho de la persona.”

<sup>24</sup> “Yo, mi recomendación es siempre que las sesiones sean semanales, o cada dos semanas máximo. No recomiendo que pasen más de dos semanas porque se pierde el momento y el hilo y ya no tanto para el cliente que para mi.”

Working with these different information about coaching durations I dare to wonder again if we are all talking about the same when we say ‘relationship’. Supposedly a relationship is not the same when established along one session, or over a period of half a year with seminal sessions. Yet, previous research by Sun et al. (2013, 8) suggests that the ‘depth’ of a relationship also depends on the coaching type. They discovered that the more personal the coaching type the deeper the coaching relationship, and vice versa. This leads me to draw connections to the different understandings of types of coaching (see chapter 2.2) present in this research, which I shall connect to possible coaching durations and coaching relationships. Even though all coaches operate in an intercultural setting, the above-mentioned perspectives of intercultural coaching are also evident here.

Coaching as intercultural learning underlies the meta concept of culture being static, closed, imaginary identities that is often identified as belonging to countries, nation states or ethnic groups. Coaching with this understanding often transmits cultural knowledge and competencies that the coachee needs to enhance performance in a new ‘culture’ (Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 69-71). “I need to be preparing myself continuously. The more you know, in this case about the German culture, for example reading books about how are Germans, how do Germans think, generalizing, helps you to know.”<sup>25</sup> says ID4. There is quite a slim line to intercultural training, which become clear with what ID3 shares: “The first contact I have with them when they arrive is when we offer them a welcome seminar, that is more like a coaching, a welcome coaching for the person.”<sup>26</sup> The participant in this research that could be assigned to this understanding of intercultural coaching interestingly had shorter coaching sessions and processes and shallower relationships. This is in line with the discovery that coachings

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<sup>25</sup> “tengo que estarme preparando contiguamente. Mientas más conoces, en este caso yo conozco más de la cultura alemana, leyendo por ejemplo, todos estos libros cómo son los alemanes, cómo piensan los alemanes, generalizando, eh, también te ayuda.”

<sup>26</sup> “El primer contacto lo tengo cuando ellos llegan porque les ofrecemos un seminario de bienvenida, que es como un coaching más bien, un coaching de bienvenida a la persona”.

that enhance the skills and competencies of coachees tend to have a less strong relationship (Sun et al. 2013, 14).

Coaching understood as coaching for people in a multicultural context has the aim to smoothen the perceived differences from the coachee in a certain context by enhancing self-reflection about presuppositions of others and processes. The coaches that seem to have that perspective on intercultural coaching state that the coaching sessions can have larger breaks in the process and that the process itself depends on the topics the coachee brings to the sessions. The relationship is consequently essential, yet similarly to coachings that develop solutions skills not as deep.

Noteworthy is that one coach who initially clarified that he/she is not specifically an intercultural coach complies with the understanding of transcultural coaching. He /she states his/her coaching profession as transitional coaching, who is also the one that requires a minimum of time investment of three months and a maximum of six months of his/her coachees. In line with the research results by Sun, Deane, Crowe, Andresen, Oades and Ciarrochi (2013, 8,14) this coach signalled a rather intense and deep relationship to his her clients.

“For me there is no difference, speaking from a cultural point of view, when speaking about what we do in coaching. I mean, I don’t see a difference that because you are German the things work differently in the coaching relationship. Simply because from my point of view the process is similar for everyone in coaching, but obviously every person lives it differently.”<sup>27</sup> (ID5)

This quote demonstrates the understanding of culture, which is in line with the definition of transcultural coaching, where *national* cultural traits are only one among many factors that act in context and that might create asymmetries, which shall be revealed in the coaching to search for solutions. This result is in line with the discovery

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<sup>27</sup> “para mi no hay una diferencia, halando desde el punto de vista cultural, a la hora de hablar que tratamos los temas del coaching. O sea, yo no veo ahí un punto que diga, ah bueno, porque eres alemán te trato diferente o las cosas funcionan diferente en la relación del coaching. Simplemente porque desde mi perspectiva, el proceso es igual para todos en el aspecto, como el proceso no cambia, pero obviamente que una persona lo vive diferente.”

that Pauw (2017, 53-54) made: the more static the understanding of culture of the coach is, the higher the coach will rate the affect of (national) culture on the relationship. Contrarily, coaches with a broader understanding of culture see (national) cultural aspects as less influential for the relationship.

Another aspect that can be drawn attention to is with regards to a problematic of the coaching profession. As it became clear with the small sample number for this research there are already great discrepancies in coaching durations. One of the most reoccurring critiques in the professionalization of coaching is that there are not yet standardizations, for example, for the coaching duration. This goes hand in hand with the unprotected term 'coach', the variety and inconstancy of coaching education and certification and the non-existing standardization of coaching processes. It is evident that also in this research a variety of coaches with different standards, approaches and certifications exist. However, international organizations like International Coach Federation are creating standards to support the formation of a coaching profession and to protect it against faulty use of professional description.

In conclusion, there are four core takeaways from this chapter. Firstly, the analysis and listing of findings in this chapter show that the aspects that play a role in creating a relationship between coach and coachee are very diverse. They are so diverse that the amount of different aspects outweighs the aspects that various or occasionally all coaches mention. Those aspects that various coaches mention are of rather general nature, such as trust or language. However, the elements of what those aspects consist of are highly diverse. They range from mother tongue use and its positive affect for coach and coachee, body language, communication style adaptations, atmosphere, humour and sympathy to coaching frameworks and communicational tools. It can further be stressed that also contradictions occurred between the statements of the coaches. This first result stroke me and I started to think about the subjectivity of the evaluation of the cultural influences on the coaching alliance. During the analysis I noticed that there is such a variety of aspects that was only partially doubled by previous research that I came to believe that there must be an evaluation based on other

factors, such as, for instance, subjectivity or cultural understanding. These thoughts are the reasoning behind the creation of the next (4.2) chapter.

As a second main takeaway I highlight the result regarding the different understanding of what ‘relationship’ as such actually is. It became clear that the coaches did not all speak about relationships with similar meanings; whilst some state there is an existing relationship when a flowing conversation takes place; other state that relationship is evident when the topics of the conversation become ‘deeper’. This result highlights yet again the individuals’ interpretation and definition of terms and constructs.

Thirdly, I draw a connection between the level of relationship and the understanding and type of coaching. Noteworthy here is that the research results show a correlation between the understanding of intercultural coaching and the deepness and consequently duration of the coaching alliance. I show that the more the coach had an understanding of intercultural coaching as intercultural learning (similarly to intercultural training) the ‘shallower’ the relationship they described and the less duration the coaching had. In this regard the cultural understanding is static, positivistic and essentialist and the coaches rate the (national) cultural influence on the coaching relationship as high. In contrast, the coach that can be assigned to understanding of intercultural coaching as transcultural coaching, which is also the definition of coaching for this work, states a ‘deeper’ relationship between coach and coachee and the duration of the coaching exceeded three months. The cultural understanding is dynamic, constructivist and fluid and the coach does not rate (national) cultural influence as highly influential for the coaching alliance. In this regard I highlighted a few points about coaching as a profession.

Lastly, I found some correlations between the existing coaching literature, yet, many of the aspects that were brought forward in this research I could not prove or contradict to literature. I believe that the researchers that investigated the coaching alliance in an intercultural setting themselves have a cultural stance that cannot be fully aligned with the modern understanding of culture. Consequently their interpretations of their research

results are significantly different than mine since they might highlight very different aspects about their findings. This leads me to clarify yet again that I am well aware about my stance as a researcher, its influence on the analysis and consequently of the findings and outcome of this research paper. This brings me back to the subjectivity of people's perceptions, which shall also be the leading threat for the next chapter.

## 4.2. Cultural Lens: Cultural Influence as the Subjective Interpretation

In the preceding chapter I outlined the difficulties of analysing the quantity of aspects that coaches name as influencers in the coaching alliance. However, culture as such, speaking in broad terms, has been an 'aspect' that all coaches mention as an impact. In this regards, it is highly interesting to see what they mean when speaking about *cultural influence*. In this chapter I shall analyse how cultural knowledge and awareness influences the interpretation and evaluation of cultural influences on the coaching and the coaching relationship. These cultural influences can be linked to the understanding of the concept of culture the coaches have. Naturally, I withdrew most of my findings from the interview categories *cultural knowledge and awareness* and *critical incidents* and enriched them with answers from the findings from the *opening and closing question* of the interviews.

All coaches but one, to which I will get back to later on, mention that cultural knowledge and the awareness of cultural influence is an important factor when coaching people from different backgrounds and when building a relationship those coachees. From *older* cultural theory and concepts we know that there might be certain macro level tendencies in regards to time perception, communication, decision-making, and other aspects that influence people from the same socialised groups. As previously discussed these influences are highly likely to not be valid in individual contact between human actors. We now know that a variety of other factors, such as context, personality, age, power structures and gender identification play a role in the interaction between individuals from different cultural groups. Yet, many practitioners in the intercultural field still hold fond of *old* theories (Ganesh 2015, 101-102). I consequently want to

suggest that the knowledge about those theories influences the individual's perception. This perception lets the practitioners, here coaches, assess the influence of (national) culture in a situation, here coaching. It furthermore makes them evaluate the factors that play a role in the relationship building.

“So, knowing your client and his/her culture, what they expect, how they interpret a situation; this is where the culture comes in. And between the Mexican and the German culture there are so many extreme difference, so to say, how we manage time, how we communicate directly or indirectly...”<sup>28</sup> (ID3)

I would like to highlight two statements in this quote. The coach claims that there are many extreme differences between the Mexican and the German culture. The examples provided by him/her of such differences are binary examples: direct – indirect communication (Hall 1981, 105) and time use driving at monochronic and polychronic time perception (Hall 1983, 44). It becomes clear that a focus on differences using bipolar dimensions is evident. Culture seems to be perceived as attributed to national cultural groups, countries and nation states, which become clear by phrasings such as ‘Mexican and German culture’. This is in line with the static understanding of culture, see chapter 2.1. In connection to this, the coach speaks about “knowing your client” by understanding the culture. Given the binary examples provided it seems that there is little room for the client to be somewhere different along that spectrum, or even on both sides of it. Recent research in the field of interculturality, especially in cultural neurosciences (Nguyen-Phuong-Mai 2017, 537; cited in Schmidt 2018, 9), highlights the fluidity of those dimensions in the individuals, in other words, all individuals, for example, can and do communicate in a direct as well as indirect manner, depending on the context. The coach claims cultural knowledge enables him/her to understand better the coachee's anxieties and expectations for the coaching, as well as the coachee's ways of thinking and interpreting situations. Furthermore, he/she states that through cultural

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<sup>28</sup> “Entonces, el conocer a tu cliente y conocer su cultura, lo que ellos esperan, eh, cómo interpretan la situación, no? Y pues ahí entre la cultura, y entre la mexicana y la alemana hay tantas diferencias, ehm, extremas, digamos, en cuanto a cómo manejamos el tiempo, como nos comunicamos de manera directa o indirecta.”



knowledge the coach can develop the coaching to the likings of the coachee. As an example he/she explains that the manner in which the coach introduces him/herself at the beginning of the coaching process is in accordance to the knowledge about the likings of the coachee of that culture. Yet, given that the cultural knowledge seems to be acquired through models and concepts of culture that describe, at best, macro-level tendencies of groups, it can be questioned if the knowledge is best allocated in the one-on-one interaction, or if it is rather an assumed liking of the coachee based on the knowledge acquired from those models and concepts. However, the coach enriched his/her knowledge with various years of experiences in the coachee's *culture*, meaning the country of origin, thus the geographically defined space, of the coachee. Yet, I dare to argue that our brain works in a way that we like to assure assumptions and knowledge with what we see (cited in Schmidt 2018, 5). It functions therefore as a lens through which we perceive the world, interactions, behaviours and people. It can be argued that people assess situations and behaviours based on previous knowledge, in other words, we see what we expect to see. Mai Nguyen-Phuong-Mai confirms this when saying that "evaluating the world based on those assumptions [speaking about static cultural assumptions], it becomes very easy to have confirmation-bias, a kind of filter that makes you see what you want to see and only what confirms your original idea." (cited in Schidt 2018, 5) It goes beyond how we evaluate a situation, it reciprocally also determines our actions: "However, the cultural lens that we use for evaluation of new situations plays a significant role in our choice of responses" (Earley 2002, 293).

Similarly, a cultural lens can be seen in the description other coaches give about the aspects that differ when coaching people from diverse backgrounds. Words like 'goal oriented', 'direct and indirect' communication and 'relationship-oriented' draw the attention to the interpretation of cultural influences based on *old* cultural understandings. These seem to be used by Mexican and by German coaches<sup>29</sup> alike.

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<sup>29</sup> I highlight the two nationalities because it shows the degree of distribution of those concepts.

“Well, Latinos, so Mexicans, communicate a lot more indirect than Germans do. This you can also see by the words they chose and how they express themselves. The way of expression is simply different.”<sup>30</sup> (ID2)

This passage is one of many that confirms the binary, static, essentialist interpretation of culture on the coaching relationship. Furthermore, there is another aspect that I would like to highlight. The fact that the coach used the word “Latinos” and then narrowed it down to “Mexicans” shows the insensitive use of the terminology, as well as it underlines the thinking of cultural frameworks as containers (Bolten 2007, 14).

Furthermore, the coach narrates that there are reoccurring issues in the coaching sessions with his/her foreign clients, which help him/her to identify the issues a new client from the same cultural background might have.

“I do think that as a coach you can, through those hypotheses, shed light on and check [what the issue might be], and for that you need the cultural and intercultural knowledge. Because many issues that come up are actually always the same. It is the communications direct-indirect, the influence of conflict, topics about leadership and dealing with hierarchy; issues about how I deal with tasks. That can be all very different. Those are, especially in work life, the typical problems.”<sup>31</sup> (ID2)

Based on the coach’s acquired cultural knowledge the assessment of the issues of new clients takes place. This might lead to an overestimation of (national) cultural influence (Roth 2017, 30) and might not allow the coach to see the coachee as an individual

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<sup>30</sup> “Also, eh, Latinos, Mexikaner kommunizieren sehr viel indirekter, als das jetzt Deutsche tun, und da sieht man auch dann schon in der Wortwahl, in der Ausdrucksweise, ähnm, dass das einfach ein anderer Ausdruck ist, eine andere Ausdrucksweise.”

<sup>31</sup> “Ich glaube schon, dass man auch Coach eben auch damit man diese Hyperthesen von denen ich vorher gesprochen habe und ein bisschen beleuchten kann oder dass man die so ein bisschen abklopfen kann, da braucht man einfach dieses kulturelle Wissen oder interkulturelle Wissen, weil viele Dinge, es sind eigentlich immer die gleichen Dinge die da hoch kommen. Es ist die Kommunikation, direkte – indirekte, es hat Einfluss auf Konflikte, es ist das Thema Führung, Hierarchie, Umgang mit der Hierarchie. Es sind vielleicht Dinge die, wie gehe ich an Aufgraben ran, die eben sehr unterschiedlich sind. Das sind eigentlich so, gerade in der Arbeitswelt, so die typischen Themen.”

(Pauw 2017, 71) because they are “expecting people to fit their cultural stereotype” (Peterson 2007, 262).

Similarly, another coach (ID3) shares that “it is not the same to simply deliver a presentation about Mexico as if you were a psychologist, because it is not connecting you to the reality of the client” but that it’s important to know their [clients’] ways of thinking, their ways of interpreting things” and “their costumes”.<sup>32</sup> Despite that the understanding of coaching as intercultural learning, which the coach seems to see as an equivalent to “seminars” becomes obvious, I dare to argue, based on the previous discussion, that getting closer to the coachee’s lived reality has very little to do with knowing about their (national) cultural costumes and ways of thinking.

From the data I retrieved together with the discussion above, the cultural lens is consequently a lens that is created due to cultural knowledge and a learned repertoire of assessment tools from *older* culture theories. Andrea Roth (2017) who has also discovered individual cultural lenses in the coaching interactions has further explained that this lens is individually built: “Coaches have different ways and levels of understanding of national cultures as they acquired their cultural knowledge and assumptions in different circumstances.” (ibid., 38) This lens can be dangerous because it makes practitioners address culture as an influencer where possibly it isn’t (Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 92-93).

Interestingly, coaches contradict their own cultural stance when making paradox statements about the influences of culture on the coaching relationship. I want to highlight a few passages where coaches make statements that suggest a more dynamic understanding of culture and the influences that act in a relationship, but that are contradicted by statements based on static, essentialist understandings in the same passage.

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<sup>32</sup> “No es lo mismo y dar solamente dar una presentación sobre México y hablar con alguien como si fuera psicólogo porque pues eso no te acerca a la realidad de tu cliente. Tienes que conocerlo, su forma de pensar, su forma de interpretar las cosas, mhm, sus costumbres.”

“I consider that it [cultural knowledge] has a great influence. Given that I have daily contact to the, lets say, traditional German culture, these rituals can be identified as German culture. This has helped me to understand aspects that for the German client are important. They like direct, to the point communication, right? [...] And I am very schematic, very clear and this has helped me. It is also part of my personality, I am organised, schematic, visual. So this goes well with the German culture, because they like that, right? Facts and figures. So I am a bit like that, certain things that I already had in me help me when giving my coachings.”<sup>33</sup>

The example that coach ID4 shares he/she states that German coachees like a direct and to-the-point communication in coaching sessions, along with an advancement in the coaching process where aspects are clearly communicated and made tangible to the coachee. Furthermore he/she claims that (all) German coaches like to hear “Facts and Figures” which the coach uses in the coaching sessions, assuming that that is what the coachees like to hear. As before mentioned, statements as generalising as this can occur due to the lens through which the coach assesses the coachee’s needs. However, explaining the same idea, the coach mentioned his/her personality that fits well to the likings of his/her German coachees. Personality is, however, a very ‘soft’ factor and highly many-faceted. Arguably, it is rather the personality that acts in the described situation as a factor to create the coaching relationship. The personality traits the Mexican coach describes are supposedly very little ‘Mexican’, which shows that individuals are by far not how macro-cultural descriptions paint them to be.

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<sup>33</sup> “Considero que influye en gran parte [*cultural knowledge*]. Eh, con lo de tener contacto directo diario con una cultura, digamos, tradicional alemana, o estos rituales que se pueden identificar como una cultura alemana. Eso me, me ha ayudado, me ha ayudado a entender cosas que para ese cliente es importante, que les gusta hablar de manera directa, les gusta ir al punto, no? [...] yo soy muy esquemática, muy clara y eso me ha ayudado. Y también es parte de mi personalidad que sé organizarme bien, que soy esquemática, que soy muy visual, entonces.. y eso, entra bien a la cultura alemana. Porque les gustan, no? Zahlen, Daten, Fakten. Y entonces, yo soy un poco así, como estructurada en eso para explicar mis cosas. [...] Ciertas cosas que yo ya traía en mi entra más fácil al momento de dar mis coachings.”

Another example is provided by ID2:

“You can also identify it [trusting relationship] through physical signals. You may know pacing as part of the NLP approach, for example. There the body language of the other is adapting to mine. That helps to identify if we connect well or not. And you can also always identify it based on the communication. In Mexico little communication is not so good because generally Latinos prefer communication over silence.”<sup>34</sup>

This coach mentions the body language of the coachee and the adaptation of communication styles between coach and coachee as an indicator of the existing level of relationship<sup>35</sup>, based on the NLP approach. Shortly after he/she states, however, that the quantity of conversation taking place in coaching sessions might also be an indication of trust and relationship, depending on the cultural background of the coachee. This clearly contradicts the previously said: the first point can be assigned to indicators based on an interpersonal, fluid, constructivist understanding of cultural influence, the second, however, is influential factors is rather evaluated based on a cultural lens formed through stereotypical assumptions of representatives of people – Mexico ranks high in the multi-active description after the Richard Lewis model, and thus, are characterized as highly talkative (Lewis 2006, 42).

There were also contradictory statements made about the factor time in regards to the relationship-building. While two coaches state that the time it takes for a person to open

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<sup>34</sup> “man kann das ja einmal über körperliche Signale auch erkennen, Sie kennen vielleicht auch aus dem NLP Pacing, zum Beispiel, wo dann eben auch an der Körpersprache des Anderen sieht, ist der in der Körpersprache meiner angepasst, wie sitzen wir, wie reden wir, daran kann man glaube ich schon viel ablesen, ob wir, ob man auf einer Wellenlänge ist, oder eben nicht. Und dann finde ich kann man das auch immer an der Kommunikation an sich feststellen. Also wenn da wenig Kommunikation ist, dann ist da eben in Mexiko nicht so gut, weil, Latinos grundsätzlich eher Kommunikation bevorzugen und Schweigen ist eher etwas unangenehm.”

<sup>35</sup> Body language and its importance as an indicator has also been mentioned by Kristina Sammut (2014, 46). However, she discovered it in regards to the coachee’s openness to learn and transform. She further highlights the importance of a trusting relationship as the context where learning takes place (ibid., 42).

up and to connect between coach and coachee is relative, another coach claims that it is culturally related how fast or slow they open up.

“I had people that clicked with me in a very special way and opened up like a book right in the beginning. I also had people with whom I have lived a process of three or four sessions until I could finally see, yes, now they opened up.”<sup>36</sup> (ID5)

“Mexicans, or Mexican culture, is one where they open up and connect relatively quickly. [...] But exactly that behaviour to be open and speak about private matters to strangers is quite normal in Mexico. This is why it is relatively easy, especially when you admit to it and also are open, to establish a good relationship.”<sup>37</sup> (ID2)

Interestingly the latter further mentions that the connection, and therefore the trust, is also established if coach and coachee find each other sympathetic. Thus, mutual sympathy as a *soft* factor highlights the interpersonal, non-national-culturally related dynamics in the process of the relationship establishment. I argue that the first part of the comment is another example for the coach’s cultural lens claiming that people from certain (national) cultures behave in a certain way. This further shows the subjective interpretation of how cultural knowledge leads coaches to assess the cultural influence on coaching relationships. On a side note, this passage connects the previous analysis’ outcome about whether we are talking about the same when we say ‘relationship’.

As afore-mentioned, there is one coach who has not identified as an intercultural coach, but has worked with clients from different backgrounds, also with the country profile relevant for this work. He/she was identified in the previous chapter as a coach who can

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<sup>36</sup> “Sí me ha tocado gente que hace un click muy especial conmigo y se abren como libro desde el principio. También gente con la que he vivido un proceso de tres cuatro sesiones cuando veo, ya, ahora sí, ya se abrieron.”

<sup>37</sup> “...die Mexikaner, oder die mexikanische Kultur, ist ja eine, wo man relativ schnell sich öffnet und andockt. [...] dieses Verhalten [...] offen und vielleicht auch gleich über private, persönliche Dinge mit eigentlich Fremden zu sprechen, das ist ja in Mexiko sehr normal. Deswegen ist es relative einfach am Anfang, wenn man sich darauf einlässt, und vor allem selber auch offen ist, da eine gute Beziehung aufzubauen.”

be assigned as doing transcultural coaching (Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 78-80). He/she mentions that (national) cultural traits are not necessarily present in the coaching, but that the coaching is very personal and that therefore it is created between coach and coachee reciprocally. The coach further stresses that one shall not adapt or change anything in the coaching based on the nationality of the coachee. This aspect has also been touched upon by Roth (2017, 35) who provided an example by one of her interviewees who alarmed about the risk of being guided by the cultural lens. In other words the risk to assess the coachee and his/her need due to the fact that he/she is from a certain country.

Consequently, the analysis above shows that all coaches do highlight interpersonal aspect in the coaching relationship. Thus, it becomes evident that the action and reaction of humans in interactions cannot be categorized or foreseen, that it is an interplay between the encountering entities and a reciprocal process where various aspects can act. In other words, encounters between two individuals is thus of a complex, interpersonal nature and also the perceptions each individual has are relevant for both sides.

That both coach and coachee have preconceptions, lenses and projections becomes evident in the next situation coach ID1 shares.

In this quote the coach was particularly talking about cultural awareness:

“Yes, well, it can have two sides. On one side, I can appear as a German expert. And there could evolve a kind of, radically put, reverence. There comes the German and yes... [on the other side] I think it is a challenge for me, when they find out I am a Mexican too because I speak Spanish so well and so on, that I need to establish my authority a lot more. Also my recognition, right? Because they think, ‘ah he is Mexican, he is like us’. And in Mexico there is something called malinchismo, that many things that come from a foreign country is better and more recognized than the own.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> “Ja, also es kann zwei Seiten haben. Einmal, kann ich da auch als der Deutsche Experte auftrete. Und dann könnte da so eine Art, ähm, jetzt mal etwas radikal gesagt,

There are a few aspects to point out with the aid of this quote. Firstly, when the question about cultural knowledge and cultural awareness was posed in the interview, it appears that the coach automatically thinks in terms of nationalities since he/she is talking about the associations and perceptions about a ‘German’ and ‘Mexican’ person. This gives some implication of the understanding of culture he/she has. Secondly, the coach mentions the effect it has on the relationship when the coach first identifies with one nationality and then with the other in front of his coachees, and highlights how the relationship changed. In this regard, he/she claims that the perception coachee(s) have about one or the other nationality can have a positive and a negative effect on the relationship. It is positive in the way that the German nationality is associated with high standards in professions by the Mexican coachees, which creates credibility for the coach’s abilities and therefore trust. At the same time this association and perception is negative for the relationship because there is a larger perceived distance between coach and coachee, so coach ID1. Thirdly, it is noteworthy that when the coach also identifies as someone of the nationality of the coachees (due to bi-nationality of the coach) it is difficult for the coach to gain back the credibility; however, at the same time it would lessen the distance between coach and coachees.

The outlined points raise more points for discussion. One point is the phenomena of “*malinchismo*” that the coach mentioned. As the coach explains correctly this phenomena describes the perception ‘Mexicans’ have about everything that come from outside of Mexico as being better than their own, or in other words “the Mexican dislike of one’s own and preferring the other” (Gerson 2004, 38). I am aware that there are more facets to the phenomena of *malinchismo*, nevertheless, shedding light on all

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aber ja Ehrfurcht entstehen, ne? Da kommt der Deutsche und ja, ich weiß nicht...” “Und ähm, und ich glaube dass es für mich dann eher eine Herausforderung ist, wenn sie merken, aha, der ist auch Mexikaner, so, weil er sehr gut Spanisch spricht, dass ich dann viel mehr, ähm, ja da erst mal da mir die Autorität aufbauen müssen, ne? Also auch diese Anerkennung aufbauen muss, ne? Weil sie dann sagen, ah, der ist ja Mexikaner (lacht) der ist dann ja so ähnlich wie wir, ne? Und da gibt es in Mexiko gibt es schon so, wie man in Mexiko sagt *Malinchismo*, das vieles, was aus dem Ausland kommt, wird viel besser und stärker anerkannt als das Eigene.”



aspects would go beyond the scope of this analysis. What is to be pointed out though is that it appears as that also coachees assess coaches (Roth 20017, 36), and based on my data due to nationality. Yet, I dare to claim that it goes beyond coaching. Specifically looking at the German-Mexican context, one could draw a connection and argue that there are even post-colonial structures involved in the perception between two individuals, since the coach mentioned that *malinchismo* showed in a way that was similar to reverence to the German coach. Opening the floor for post-colonial discussions and dynamics would go beyond the scope, yet, it should not be underestimated when looking at intercultural encounters between individuals (Irani and Dourish 2009, 251). It further calls for awareness of coaches when interacting and interpreting encounters with coachees from different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, this highlights yet again an understanding of culture that is diverse, non-static and in the *modern* paradigm: “A postcolonial perspective on intercultural collaboration highlights the relevance of cultural change and dynamics in understanding intercultural encounters.” (ibid., 251)

Another point is to be made about ingroup and outgroup identification (Tajfel 1982) that becomes clear in the described situation. This phenomenon could explain the positive improvement of the relationship when the coach identifies as a member of the same ‘group’, since members of one group identify mutually and thus are trusted. Furthermore, it is possible to link this to an understanding of culture that is binary, looking at differences rather than similarities and is the basis of some coaches’ approaches and/or interpretations and/or assessments.

As a last point about how nationality can evoke identification I would like to note one striking aspect: the coach who was previously identified as being closest to the transcultural, fluid, dynamic end of the understanding of culture and coaching also commented about the sense of belonging to people that identify with the same nationality:

“Well, it is true that when I work with Mexican people I identify with them a lot more than with others because obviously we come from the same culture. I

mean, I can make better sense of the things he/she is telling me because of the cultural background. But I think that is in all other aspects as well, right? I mean, you always feel more identified with the people from your culture.”<sup>39</sup> (ID5)

Here, despite previous statements, the coach seems to understand culture also as synonym for national culture. This leads to believe that people lack awareness of the coherent use of the word *culture*. Furthermore, it attracts the attention to the lack of consistency of cultural understanding in work and daily use; sometimes it is understood as fluid, sometimes it is understood as solid.

Concluding this subchapter there are three main takeaways. In the beginning I show that in contrast to other scholars, I have discovered a subjective interpretation of how culture influences the coaching relationship. In this regard, I have identified a cultural lens through which coaches evaluate the cultural influence on the alliance. This lens is formed by the acquired cultural knowledge of the coach through cultural dimensions and cultural theories that can be allocated in the *old* paradigm in the discussion around the concepts of culture. It is evident “that there seems to be an underlying positivist notion of culture in the discussion of cross-cultural coaching, but a subjective interpretation of culture in the coaching practise.” (Roth 2017, 38) Interesting is that even though most coaches make statements that indicated a static understanding of culture and its influence on interactions, they name interpersonal factors at the same time, thus, the coaches’ cultural reality looks possibly different to what they state however, practitioners might not be aware of it. Moreover, I highlight that coaches enrich their cultural knowledge with lived experiences in the (geographic) cultural area. Here I stressed the possibility of confirmation bias about the cultural knowledge.

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<sup>39</sup> “Bueno, es verdad que cuando trabajo con gente mexicana, pues me identifico muchísimo más que con otros porque pues es obvio que venimos de la misma cultura, no? O sea, puedo entender más el sentido de las cosas que me dicen, cómo se sienten con una parte background cultural. Pues, por ese lado sí, pero yo creo que eso pasa por cualquier ámbito, no?, no solo en el coaching. O sea, siempre te sientes más identificado con la gente de tu cultura.”

Secondly, I show how this lens is connected to the understanding of culture and coaching and that it can possibly lead the coach to faultily assess the coachee's needs for the coaching where (national) cultural influences is rated very strongly. As Plaister-Ten (2013, 66) states "an overemphasis on cultural theory, particularly the dimensions, can lead to sophisticated stereotyping (Osland and Bird, 2000) and an 'either/or' perspective. This is not useful in an engagement seeking to leverage the strength in diversity that may be derived from a 'both/and' paradigm." The mentioned 'both/and' paradigm is also a result in this research as coaches have contradicted themselves in statements about the cultural influence on coaching. However, this is not only referring to cultural values that can be 'both/and', for instance direct and indirect, but also the described cultural assessment through a static cultural and a dynamic cultural understanding.

Lastly, I show the reciprocity of human interactions and underscored the interpersonal nature of intercultural encounters. In this connection I explored that there are also possible cultural lenses of the coachees and I argue that those perceptions can be drawn to post-colonial projections and preconceptions. Moreover, I underscored social psychological dynamics in regards to ingroup and outgroup phenomena, here in regards to identification via nationality. This result underlines the complexity of intercultural encounters that is in line with the *modern* understanding of cultural paradigms where a diversity of factors, for instance power structure or group dynamics, become salient.

### 4.3. Creating Culture and Relationship Together

In the previous chapter one of the main takeaways was that even though most coaches mention (national) cultural influences on the coaching relationship, which seem to be a subjective interpretations as established above, most coaches further mention rather dynamic and interpersonal aspects that determine the relationship and its building. My research findings mirror those of researcher, such as (Pauw 2017, 56-58; Edwards and Graham 2014, 70), who highlight the importance of creating a shared coaching relationship and the understanding that creating normality is done through connecting

on different levels that are not (national) culturally defined (Ratje 2007, 262). I shall demonstrate how coaches create the coaching culture in their coaching sessions and point out confirmations or discrepancies with other research or theories.

“But these are aspects that I clarify right from the beginning in the first chat, where we create the process where I explain to them what I do and what not, what they can expect from me and what I expect from them; and so creating trust as well, right?”<sup>40</sup> (ID5)

In this quote the coach explains how he/she is clarifying certain rules and expectations for the coaching process. What is noteworthy is that the coach does not only state the clarifications about the expectations for the coach but also for the coachee. The creating of a coaching framework is in other words the creation of an interactional context. In this context the coach and the coachee reciprocally interact and we can see that not only the coach but also the coachee has a responsibility for the coaching relationship. This aspect has also been highlighted by Machin (2010) who concludes that “there is perhaps an increased likeliness that, within the coaching, the client has a shared responsibility for the process.” (ibid., 46) It becomes evident that the two interacting partners jointly and actively shall construct the context, the interaction rules and consequently the relationship. This leads to conclude that the responsibility for the coaching outcome is also shared between the two people. Additionally, the coach (ID5) mentions that this relationship, and consequently effects on the outcome, are characterized by an involvement and dedication to a hundred per cent by both parties: “it is not a relationship where I put 50 and the client puts 50. But I put 100 and the client also puts 100. If the client doesn’t give 100, well the result will also not be 100.”<sup>41</sup> The coaching relationship is consequently constructed and defined between coach and coachee and both parties have to provide their full potential. It can be argued that trust and

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<sup>40</sup> “Pero eso son cosas que yo aclaro desde el principio; también en esta primera charla donde vamos creando procesos donde les explico que eso es lo que sí hago y lo que no hago, eso es lo que puedes esperar de mí, es lo que yo espero de ti e ir creando esa confianza, no?”

<sup>41</sup> “esta no es una relación donde yo pongo un 50 y el cliente 50. Sino, yo pongo mi 100 y el cliente pone su 100. Si el cliente no pone su cien, pues tampoco va a haber 100 de resultados, no?”

commitment, for example, are “social constructs [that] involve mutual responsibility between coach and client and as a result may be difficult to develop as a coach cannot accomplish the process alone.” (Boyce et al. 2010, 917). Hence, one can say that coach and coachee are building a coaching culture that creates their relationship.

In this process I want to point out an aspect previously brought in (4.1): identification. ID5’s quote nicely underlines this aspect:

“This is something we share, that affects us identically to a certain extent. I mean, this process of change/transformation is lived in many phases similarly. So, more than the culture, I would say it is what connects us, what mutually identifies us. So there is a connection point but in reality it doesn’t matter if you are German, Belgium, Mexican or Chinese.”<sup>42</sup>

Now, I must discover why these *identification points* are fruitful for the relationship between people from diverse backgrounds. While previously their relevance for enhancing trust was shown, they are also of importance for the establishment and development of a relationship overall. Finding similarities and being able to identify with the other person creates a feeling of connection. The other person is no longer just a service provider or a coach but someone that is on some level more similar to oneself that initially thought. Baumeister and Lary (1995) hypothesize that it is in our nature “that human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships.” (ibid., 497). In this quote two aspects are evident that are also present in an alliance such as the coaching relationship. Firstly, the need to feel that we connect, are similar to one another and that we can identify with the other, at least partially. This need is overarching and thus hardly culturally related. This is why I argue that all coaches, no matter what cultural understanding they have, highlighted this factor in the interviews. Secondly, identification and a sense of belonging is particularly the case in interpersonal

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<sup>42</sup> “Eso es algo que compartimos y eso creo es algo que nos afecta hasta cierto punto igual, sin importante de d nde vengamos, no? O sea, ese proceso de cambio se vive en muchos de esos fases muy similar, no? Entonces, m s que la cultura, yo dir a pues, [...] lo que nos une o nos identifica [...] Entonces, ah  tambi n hay un punto de conexi n pero en realidad da igual si eres Alemana, B lgica, Mexicana o China, o sea...”

relationship. This point leads to the argument that some coaches who have the stance of cultural understanding of static boxes ignore the fact that in interactions individuals meet, not cultures (Nazarkiewicz and Krämer 2012, 324). Connecting these thoughts to the previous paragraph where the reciprocal creation of a coaching culture was shown, it can be highlighted that this creation of connection is the first step to construct the coaching relationship jointly. Looking for identifications points, creating normality, identifying rules and constructing the context for the interaction together can be seen as ‘doing’ culture together. In other words, the coach and coachee create culture right then in the moment.

What coaches use, consciously or unconsciously, to create the sense of belonging and through which tools they achieve that became evident in different parts of the interviews. Two coaches (ID2, ID4) mention that talking about *personal matters* helps to connect to the client and to create a bond. Arguing with Ratje’s model (2007, 261-265), the coaches are consequently looking for overlapping collectives. Ratje states that each individual is part of various collectives and when interacting with a new person these collectives *meet*. It is thus a process of finding out where the connection points lay. Speaking about personal matter can consequently help in this process.

Furthermore, another coach (ID3) mentions that having lived in Germany and in Mexico and knowing their ‘cultures’ enables the coach to provide *examples* of both places. Via these examples the coach intends to connect to experiences the coachee may have had, with the aim to create connection points, through which also the coachee can then identify him/herself with.

A third tool two coaches state is that the “best way [to create a relationship] is to be authentic”<sup>43</sup>(ID5). *Authenticity* is meant in the sense of showing a human level, personality and personal experiences, so the coach. The other phrases this as “being human”<sup>44</sup> (ID4). This can open the door to discover on what levels the two interlocutors can connect. In this regards another coach mentions a factor that is on a highly personal perception level: *sympathy*. Since this aspect was brought forward by a German

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<sup>43</sup> “lo único que te puedo decir es que la mejor herramienta [...] es siendo auténtica”

<sup>44</sup> “te estás abriendo y siendo una persona más”

participant, the meaning of the words is better translated into *likable* or *personable*, given that the English term can also have a connotation to a different association, for instance condolences (Merriam-Webster 2018). In other words, that coach and coachee have to find each other 'likable' on a personal level in order to build a trusty work relationship in coaching. Another coach (ID5) even mentioned an "energetic level" on which coach and coachee have to "click" in order for the relationship to establish. These aspects are all highly interpersonal and reciprocal, yet, hardly culturally related.

Most coaches further mention that coachees open up when there is a safe space to do so. Research from the field of intercultural neurosciences has shown that our brain's emotional centre, the amygdala, unconsciously sends information about the danger or not-danger of an object or interaction significantly faster than the part of the brain that decides logically. In other words, we know a lot quicker if something is dangerous without that part of the brain involved that supposedly decides that. Not feeling scared or feared, in other words feeling safe, is thus crucially important for a fruitful relationship. Linking to the discussion before, coaches explain that searching for identification points to connect could be seen as part of creating a safe environment. When we feel belonging and acceptance without judgment fear is supposedly low. For the coaching outcome this is an important aspect to realise since "complex thought is possible if there is time and the absence of fear." (cited in Schmidt 2018, 8) In this quote the factor time was brought back into the picture, which is yet another point to draw the coaches' attention to: interpersonal processes, where perceptions, neurological processes, power structures, and many more aspects play a role, are highly complex. Thus, the duration of the coaching process should take this into consideration. In sum, the time it takes to build a relationship is subjectively, depending on the client-coach interaction, as also two coaches say.

Coming back to the co-creation of the coaching culture I shall underscore one aspect that is under discussion in the coaching field, as well as it is an aspect touched upon by the coaches of this research. Coaching as an originally 'Western' approach/concept has been criticised as not being universal (Nangalia and Nangalia 2010, 63). While these

two scholars drive specifically at social hierarchy in coaching sessions, one coach (ID2) of this research refers to the fact that the coaching process is not universal, meaning that the coaching procedure is not the same for every coachee. Moreover, he/she explains that the coach has to adapt the coaching process flexibly to avoid difficult incidents with the coachee. This example highlights yet again the dynamic nature of human interaction and that it is a reciprocal phenomena. This leads to argue that there is a need to ‘un-culture’ the coaching approach and move to a more dynamic understanding.

The main takeaways of this subchapter are twofold. In the beginning I show that the creation of a shared coaching framework consists of negotiating a context for the coaching. In this context both parties construct the rules and expectations for the coaching process. The relationship is thereby co-created and a reciprocal phenomena, thus, fundamental for human interaction (Mauss 1967). Furthermore, this suggests that the responsibility for the relationship as well as for the coaching outcome is divided between the coach and the coachee. In this process the coaches have stressed the importance of mutual identification and finding points of connection throughout the interviews. In line with Ratje’s model of multicollectivity, coach and coachee connect through different cultures of which national culture is only one of many. This creation of normality for the coaching process can be seen as creating a coaching culture and relationship jointly. National - cultural traits, unlike it was claimed by many study participants, was not the only, if one, aspect that was present in the interaction between coach and coachee.

Furthermore, this chapter shows that the connection between two interlocutor is a highly complex interpersonal phenomena where time, felling safe, sympathy, among other aspects play a role. Connections to aspects of cultural neuroscience were drawn, specifically highlighting the importance of a safe space in the coaching alliance for maximal outcome in the coaching process.



## **5. Where Does this Leave Us? Concluding Discussion**

Reaching the end of this research paper I shall conclude on the work as a whole; meaning that implications for practitioners are drawn from the results this research has brought forward, the research questions shall be answered and the hypothesis shall be proven or disproves, the research methodology and overall approach is critically acknowledged and future research areas are identified.

### **5.1. Results and Implications for Practitioners**

In the beginning and throughout this work I positioned myself as a researcher aiming at contributing to the research corpus with the understanding of cultural knowledge located in the modern paradigm of cultural research. In accordance with this, a constructivist and interpretivist approach to reality, thus also to intercultural encounters and research, was chosen. With this stance I was consequently evaluating the research data for this work.

In general terms this research displays that the participants have a positivistic, essentialist and static understanding of culture and intercultural interactions. However, the analysis shows that the coaches also evaluate influences on the coaching relationship from an interpersonal point of view, which I connected to a dynamic, constructivist and modern understanding of culture. This is significant to highlight in the light of the research's approach of a 'both/and' paradigm in intercultural encounters.

The first research question was to identify the aspects that play a role when establishing a coaching alliance between coach and coachee. The results of the data reveals a large variety of aspects that coaches mentioned in this regards. Here, two significant points are to note: On one hand, the number of aspects that are different from one another or even contradict each other outweigh the aspects that are similar. On the other hand, the coaches mention a number of interpersonal and 'soft' factors as influencers for the relationship. While previous researchers' works identify national-cultural traits as

influencers on the coaching relationship, I show that the evaluation of (national) cultural influence in the coaching alliance is subjective and constructed. In this regard, a cultural lens is identified through which the coaches assess the assumed cultural influence on coaching. The subjectivity of evaluation and assessment seems to be a red thread when looking at the results this research because also *relationship* is highly subjectively interpreted. In other words, coaches talk about different levels of *relationship* when they speak about the coaching alliance. Putting this result into the coaching context, I show the connection between the understanding and type of coaching with the depth or level of the relationship.

As a second set of research questions I wanted to identify possible national cultural traits and determine exactly what they would be. Further, I wanted to investigate to what extent they influence the coaching relationship and why. In line with the previous research result I show that the coaches mention national cultural aspects but that their evaluation is connected to the cultural lens the coaches have. This cultural lens is evidently built through cultural models in the intercultural field that can be assigned to the older/traditional paradigm. Consequently, this evaluation is based on a cultural understanding that is made to describe macro-cultural tendencies of groups, however, they do not necessarily describe the actions and values of individuals. From this results the cultural influence the coaches mention is to be taken with a grain of salt.

Moreover, this cultural lens can lead to an overestimation of cultural influence in interactions, here in the coaching context. Connected to this I outline a possibility for faulty assessment of the coachee's needs where coaches see a (national) cultural influence where there perhaps isn't. An issue the coachee might have could be connected to another cultural problem, for instance, of not being accepted as a woman or a man in a certain group. In this regard, the extent of national cultural influence can possibly be overrated which therefore answers the other part of the research question. The research data further shows that also coachees are led by perceptions and preconceptions. Coachees possibly evaluate the coaches based on nationality and the connecting associated degree of professionalism. This result underlines the

understanding of culture as being multifaceted, where more than just national cultural traits acts in the interaction between individuals and where power structures and ingroup and outgroup dynamics become evident, for example.

Another core result discovers the reciprocity and co-creation of a coaching context. In the case of this research we can speak about the creation of a coaching relationship, also to be called as a coaching culture. The coaches describe various incidences, factors and tools that can be identified as proactively looking for connections points and overlapping collectives. This highlights the dynamic, interpersonal nature of the establishment of a relationship where arguably national-cultural traits move to the background, if they show at all. This shows that coach and coachee are mutually responsible for the coaching relationship as well as for the coaching outcome. I further highlight that searching for mutual identification can be linked to the human's need to belong, which is not national-culturally bound.

The results of the analysis let me now prove the hypothesis as right. The research shows that national cultural aspects might be present in the coaching alliance, but that the multitude of other, supposedly transcultural, aspects that the coaches mention is in line with the hypothesized statement. This clearly locates this research result in the modern paradigm of cultural understanding. Since the research participants however do mention national cultural aspects as important for the relationship in intercultural coaching and the subjectivity of that evaluation has been shown, there are various implications that can be provided for practitioners in the field.

The most logically concluded implication from this study is, what I want to call, 'un-culturing'. This means the necessity for the practitioners to un-learn what they see as 'culture' and cultural knowledge and reflect upon the evaluation of cultural influence and the perception that comes with it. In practise this means actively reflecting on the presumed cultural knowledge they have and prove or hold it against reality. This is strongly connected with becoming aware of new findings and theoretical approaches in the field of expertise. In this process, it may require some courage and willingness to

reconsider perceptions, professional knowledge and approach for the coaches. While this is a demanding task, it could have a great impact for the field as well as for societies and the future, given that applying some cultural theories in inadequate contexts may cause the opposite to what they are intending to do, that is separation and creation of *the other* (Said 1978).

This reconsideration would further live up to the internationalization of the cultural of each individual. This internationalization of culture drives particularly at the diversifying cultural values that each person holds given that we change in a variety of ways under a variety of different circumstances along our lives (Shaules and Kollig 2015). Inspired by the “newly-emerging discipline of cultural neuroscience [that] has taken the intercultural field by storm” (cited in Schmidt 2018, 3), coaches may understand that “our brain is so plastic that we represent multiple cultures in our mind, switching between values simultaneously, to the point that we can be both collectivist and individualistic as long as a specific context activates that element in us. This insight requires us to reconsider the notion that culture is the software of the mind, as Hofstede said, and replace it with a suggestion from neuroscience: context is the software of the mind” (ibid., 9). For the coaching context this means that coaches shall apply great awareness and a high degree of consciousness (Wilson 2013, 48-49) when working with *all* clients and co-creatingly establish the room for interaction where people are seen as people; only then, national-cultural knowledge could be applied flexibly and correctly.

An implication for the coaching profession can also be drawn from the afore-mentioned implication, which is the need to ‘un-culture’ the predominantly western-approach to coaching. Thus, all practitioners when working and perceiving a difference to the interlocutor must think about an un-learning and un-culturing of knowledge, approaches, professions and most importantly perceptions. Concluding, this quote sums up the cultural understanding and the nature of its subject really well: “Culture is in a constant state of flux in the globalized world-systems, and people need to be flexible in order to ride the waves of culture.” (Yu 2013, 7)

## 5.2. Critical Acknowledgment and Future Research

Part of a scientific work is to reflect critically on one's own work. Methodologically I critically highlight the number of research participants on which the research results are based. The connecting generalisation is consequently not given, yet, the results may inspire further and larger, possibly quantitative, research. Even though people's experiences are difficult to represent with a quantitative research and should be handled with caution, the intercultural research sphere is lacking large-scale qualitative research with possible statistical significance. Furthermore, I used qualitative content analysis and not a grounded theory approach. The latter could have possibly brought forward theoretical ideas based on the findings, which are needed in the intercultural coaching field. Given that the interviews are also interactions between two individuals, I could have taken more time to 'connect' to the interviewees before conducting the interviews given that with some participants we moved rapidly to the interviewee form and the actual interview. A connection with the coaches might have influenced their answers in terms of longitude, for instance.

There are three research areas that I can identify that would lead to fruitful knowledge in the coaching and intercultural field. Derived straight from this research's results I would suggest to carry out a (larger) study with the same or very similar topic but with coaches that identify with a modern cultural understanding and thus allocate themselves as doing coachings in line with characteristics of transcultural coaching. Logically, the result on what the national-cultural influence on coaching is might be significantly different. The aim in that investigation could further be to identify *when* national-cultural traits become salient in the relationship and more importantly state implications for when practitioners may apply, if at all, their national-cultural knowledge in the establishment and maintenance of a coaching alliance. Furthermore, a next research could investigate the meaning of relationship. While this sounds quite philosophical, it becomes evident in this research that relationship as a construct is not always defined the same, hence, the study could elaborate on 'When is a relationship a relationship' in coaching and 'what kind of relationship is necessary for a positive coaching outcome?'

In connection to that and derived from the necessity of having more ‘tangible’, to work with models allocated in the modern understanding of culture, a model for relationship building in (transcultural) coaching could be designed. When speaking about (reciprocal) relationship there should also be more studies identifying the creation and maintenance of such from the coachees’ perspective.

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## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interviewee Form

#### Interviewee Form

Interviewee Nr. \_\_\_\_\_ Category: Mex. \_\_\_\_\_ Ger. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Form of conduction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ male \_\_\_\_\_ female

Occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_

Specialization (type of coaching/ country focus):

\_\_\_\_\_

Qualification/certification as a coach:

\_\_\_\_\_

Since when working as a coach:

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2: Interview Guidelines: Categories and Questions

### Appendix 2a: German Guideline

#### Interview Guideline: Categories and Questions – Deutsch

Bevor wir starten habe ich ein paar Fragen zu Ihrem beruflichen Hintergrund:

→ *interviewee form*

Hinweis: Aufzeichnung des Interviews und eventuelle Notizen, Freiwilligkeit der Beantwortung aller Fragen.

#### Einleitende Frage

- Wie nehmen Sie den Beziehungsaufbau im interkulturellen Coaching wahr, wenn Coach und Coachee nicht den selben kulturellen Hintergrund haben?
- *F hren sie ihre Coachings pers nlich, via Skype oder Telefon durch?*
- *Wie lange begleitet sie ein Klient? Wie oft finden die Coachings statt?*

#### Sprache

- Welche Rolle spielt Sprache bei dem Beziehungsaufbau zu ihrem Klient?
- *auf welcher Sprache f hren Sie das Coaching durch? Wessen Muttersprache?*
- *Inwieweit empfinden Sie eine  berlegenheit des Muttersprachlers/-In?*

#### Vertrauen

( berleitung: Vertrauen ist oft als wichtiger Bestandteil einer Coach-Coachee Beziehung genannt)

- Wie schaffen Sie Vertrauen zu Ihren/ in Ihren interkulturellen Coaching sessions?
- Was sind die Faktoren, die Vertrauen schaffen?
- *(Vertraulichkeit, Kompetenz, etc.)*
- *Wie stellen Sie fest das Vertrauen aufgebaut wurde / existiert?*

#### Zeit

( berleitung: Wahrnehmung des Faktors Zeit im interkulturellen Coaching)

#### Dauer

- Wie nehmen Sie den Faktor Zeit im Zusammenhang mit dem Beziehungsaufbau wahr?
- Wie lang dauert es um eine tragf hige Beziehung zu ihrem Coachee aufzubauen?

- Inwieweit denken Sie, spielt ihr eigenes kulturelles Wissen eine Rolle bei dem Beziehungsaufbau?

#### Entwicklung

- Wie würden Sie die Entwicklung / Weiterentwicklung der Beziehung über die Zeit des Coachings beschreiben? (*von der ersten bis zur letzten Sitzung*)
- Inwieweit entwickelt sich die Beziehung und was machen Sie dafür verantwortlich?

#### **Critical Incidents**

- Haben Sie bereit Critical Incidents in Ihren Interkulturellen Coachings gehabt und wie haben diese die Beziehung beeinflusst?
- Wie kommen diese Critical Incidents zustande? Inwieweit sehen sie diese im Zusammenhang mit einem unterschiedlichen Verständnis von Coaching?
- *Hierarchie, Verständnis von Coaching, Rollenverständnis in Coaching*

#### **Kulturelle Sensibilität / Einfluss von Kultur aufs Coaching**

- Inwieweit beeinflusst ihr persönliches (inter-)kulturelles Wissen (über das Land ihres Coachees) die Beziehung zu ihrem Coachee?
- Haben Sie bereits den Eindruck gehabt, dass es für Sie als Coach von Vorteil für die Beziehung sein kann, wenn Sie nicht den selben kulturellen Hintergrund (wie Ihre Klient) haben? Inwiefern?

#### **Zum Schluss**

- Ihrer Meinung nach, welche sind die fundamentalen Aspekte die beim Aufbau einer Beziehung im interkulturellen Coaching eine Rolle spielen?

Vielen Dank! Haben Sie noch Fragen, Kommentare oder Anregungen?

## Appendix 2b: Spanish Guideline

### Interview Guideline: Category and Questions – Spanish

Antes de empezar:

- quisiera preguntarte algunas preguntas sobre tu trasfondo profesional
- *interviewee form*

*Aviso:* También te aviso que voy a grabar la entrevista (para poder escucharla después otra vez y para analizarla mejor). Además es posible que tomaré algunas notas.  
Toda la información está usada de forma anónima y en mi tesis no mencionaré nombres.

*Transición:* Ya había mencionado que mi investigación es sobre el coaching intercultural, más específicamente quiero ver, cuáles aspecto juegan un papel en el establecimiento de una relación con el cliente, si el cliente no viene de la misma cultura que el coach. En tu caso, con tus clientes alemanes.

#### Pregunta de introducción

- ¿En tu experiencia, cómo has vivido el establecimiento de una relación con tu coachee alemán.?
- *¿Ves a tus clientes en persona? ¿O virtual? ¿Cómo influye eso la sesión?*

#### Lengua/idioma

- ¿Cuál es el papel del idioma en la relación con tu cliente? (¿De qué forma influye el lenguaje en el coaching?)
- *¿Haces tus coachings en Alemán o Español?*
- *¿Sientes alguna dificultad por parte de tus clientes con el idioma? Y cómo influye eso el coaching/ la relación?*
- *¿Sientes algunas veces una incomodidad (relación negativa) entre el hablante nativo y el hablante no-nativo? ¿Cómo influye la relación?*

#### Confianza

- ¿Cómo estableces confianza en tus sesiones de coaching? Cómo te ganas la confianza de tus clientes alemanes?
- *integridad, profesionalidad, etc.*
- ¿Cuáles son los factores que generan confianza con tus clientes alemanes? ¿Qué es lo que genera confianza?
- *¿Cómo te das cuenta que te ganaste la confianza de un cliente?*

## **Tiempo**

### duración

- ¿Cómo percibes el factor “tiempo” en el establecimiento de una relación con tu cliente?
- *¿Cuántas veces ves a un/una cliente? ¿Cuánto tiempo dura para establecer una relación (buena) con tu cliente?*

### desarrollo

- ¿A lo largo del coaching, cómo describirías el desarrollo de la relación?
- *¿En cuanto al nivel de relación, en cuanto al cambio de la relación? ¿Cómo lo has vivido?*

## **Incidentes críticos**

- ¿A lo largo de tu carrera como coach, has tenido incidentes críticos con tus clientes? De ser así, ¿cómo han afectado la relación con tu cliente?
- ¿Porqué crees que han sucedido/pasado?
- ¿Hasta qué punto consideras que existe una conexión entre los incidentes críticos y las diferencias en el entendimiento del concepto (p.ej. expectativas del coaching) de coaching?
- *diferentes papeles en el coaching, percepción del coaching, jerarquía?*

## **Conciencia cultural / Influencia de cultural**

- ¿Hasta qué punto tus conocimientos sobre Alemania influyen la relación que llevas con un cliente Alemán?
- *la consciencia cultural, conocimientos culturales, etc.*
- ¿Te da la impresión que no ser de la misma cultura puede ser una ventaja? ¿En qué manera? ¿Ha beneficiado la relación? ¿De qué manera?

## **Para recapitular**

¿Cuáles son los aspectos que juegan un papel en el establecimiento de una relación con tu cliente? (*aspectos fundamentales*)

¡Muchas gracias!

## Appendix 2c: English Guideline

### Interview Guideline: Categories and Questions – English

#### Before we start:

I would like to ask you some question about your professional background.

-> *Interviewee form*

I would also like to inform you that the interview will be recorded and that might take some notes for myself. All data is confidential and will be handled with anonymity. You may also answer the questions you want to answer.

*Transition:* As you know I am researching on the relationship building in intercultural coaching situations when coach and coachee are not from the same background!

#### Introductory Question

How have you experienced the relationship building in intercultural coaching when your client is not from the same cultural background as you?

- *how do you conduct your coachings (skype, face-to-face, etc.)?*

#### Language

- What role does the language play in the relationship-building?
- *Power relations between coach/coachee // mother tongue/foreign language*
- *Advantages/disadvantages and why?*

#### Trust

*(Transition: Trust is an important part in coachings)*

- How do you create trust in your cross-cultural coaching session ?
- What creates trust in the relationship towards Mexican/German client? What does trust consist of?

#### Time

*(perception of time in regards to relationship building)*

Duration:

- How do you perceive time in regards to relationship building to your Mex./Germ.

client?

- In what way do you think does your own cultural knowledge about Germany/Mexico influence the time of relationship building?

Development:

- How would you describe the development/evolution of the relationship over time? (From the first to the last session?)

- Have you experienced changes in the relationship over time? In what way?

### **Critical Incidents**

- Have you ever experienced critical incidents in intercultural coaching situations and how have they influenced the relationship to your client?

- In what way do you see critical incidences related to differences in the understanding of coaching? (*social hierarchy, perception of coaching, different understanding of role in coaching, etc*)

### **Awareness/Influence of Culture on Coaching**

- In what way influences (*your*) cultural awareness (*about the coachee's cultural background*) intercultural coaching sessions?

- Have you had the impression that not coming from the same cultural background was in some way conducive / beneficial to the relationship building? And if so, in what way?

- *Positive effects of not being from the same cultural background?*

### **To sum up**

- What are the aspects that you feel, based on your experience, influence the relationship in intercultural coaching?

Thank you!

Do you want to share/add any other experiences/ aspects to the relationship building in intercultural coaching situations?

## Appendix 3: Interview Transcripts

### Appendix 3a: Transcript ID1

*(Short introduction by interviewer about the research topic)*

K: Interviewer

I: Interviewee

K: Ok, dann so ganz allgemein als einleitende Frage, ähm, wie du den Beziehungsaufbau zu Klienten im Coaching erlebst, beziehungsweise auch spezifisch zu Mexikanischen Klienten in unserem Falle jetzt.

I: Bitte, nochmal?

K: Zu mexikanischen Klienten in unserem Falle.

I: Ow, wie ich den Beziehungsaufbau erlebe, ähm, sehr stark, mhm ja, beziehungsorientiert. Ne? Also da muss ich viel investieren um, oder da investiere ich gerne Zeit auch erst einmal, über, ähm ja, viel über sie zu erfahren, über die Kultur, über das Essen, über... Ja, also ich empfinde das als sehr wichtig erst mal da so eine Vertrauensbasis aufzubauen, die nicht so rein sachlich und objektive. Sachlich wenn du's so willst, wie ich das beispielsweise mit deutsche Klienten erlebe. Ne? Da ist war Beziehungsaufbau auch wichtig, aber da geht man sehr schnell in tiefere Bereiche.

K:Mhm

I: In Mexiko fängt das erst einmal oberflächlich an, da muss man erst einmal Vertrauen aufbauen; da ist das nicht gleich so gegeben wie ich das hier erlebe.

K: Ok, mhm, die meisten Coachinggespräche die du mit mexikanischen Klienten hattest, waren die persönliche oder waren die per Skype oder über eine persönliche ähm...

I: Ne, das war vor Ort, und ich hatte, das war nicht eins-zu-eins, sondern das war ein Gruppencoaching was ich in Mexiko gemacht hatte...(2:00) ähm und, ja, da haben wir dann, das musst du dann natürlich anders angehen wie im eins-zu-eins Gespräch mit deinem Coachee, und trotzdem brauchte es Zeit und viel Investition und Vertrauen, dass die ähm, das muss man aufbauen. Mein Vorteil ist, dass ich die Kultur kenne und sehr stark und sehr schnell einsteige auf dieses Niveau erst einmal mit Witz und dass es nicht so ernsthaft ist, erst einmal mit ein bisschen Humor...

K:Ok, mhmim

I: Dann äh, da einzusteigen und ähm ja, genau, würde ich sagen, so erlebe ich also den

wichtigsten unterschied.

K: Und öhm du hattest Vertrauen als wichtigsten Aspekt genannt... Wie schaffst du Vertrauen zu deinen Klienten? Was sind die Faktoren, wo du denkst, dass ist was, das schafft Vertrauen? (3:09)

D: Ähm, was ich denke, was vertrauen schafft ist denke ich Ähnlichkeiten zu suchen. Ne? Also inwiefern, was habe ich erlebt, wie sehen ich das in Mexiko, was hatte ich... Also da hilft mir natürlich meine Vergangenheit, in dem Sinne, dass ich da geboren bin, ne? Und dann spreche ich perfekt die Sprache, ne?

Und zwar war dieses Training auf englisch und zwar hab ich in den Pausen dann auch sehr schnell auf Spanisch umgewechselt und das war dann, da geht es dann um ähnliche Erfahrungen, wie wird das hier und da gemacht, wie haben ich das in Mexiko gesehen, also unterschiedliche Perspektiven auf die Sache (4:08)

Mit Humor, mit Wirtz, einfach dass sie das Gefühl haben, er ist einer von uns. Ich glaube das kann schwierig sein, vor allem in dem Kontext in dem ich da gearbeitet habe, musst du viel Vertrauen aufbauen, damit sie sich öffnen. Und so wie ich das erlebt habe, ähm, wird in Mexiko viel auf der Oberfläche gesprochen und diskutiert und gewitzelt, aber da tatsächlich auf eine tiefere Ebene *{zu kommen}* braucht es tatsächlich einen großen Vertrauensvorschuss, ne? Und den muss man erst einmal aufbauen.

K: Mhmim, ok, ja.

I: Da ist das anders hier, finde ich. Da ist schneller ein Vertrauen da.

K: Wie, sagen wir mal, wie stellst du fest, dass das Vertrauen dann da ist? Also das Vertrauen, was man braucht? (5:12)

I: mhmim. Das ist eine Gute Frage. Das ist glaube ich ein Gefühl, ähm... und dann wenn ich merke, sie öffnen sie hier und da, und fragen an, von sich zu erzählen. Dann nehme ich mich zurück... also ganz achtsam dabei zu sein, ne? Und die dann mit stärkenden Sätzen anzufangen, sie zu begleiten... Dass sie sich dann trauen sich zu öffnen und die Themen dann anzugehen und ähm, zu benennen.

Zumindest, was so meine Erfahrung war, dass sie dort so mit Reflektion und Selbstreflektion eher nicht vertraut waren, ne? Aber das ist natürlich von Klientenebene zu Klientenebene anders, ne?

K: Jap (6:23) Ähm du hattest auch erwähnt, dass Zeit eine wichtige Rolle spielt für die Beziehung und den Beziehungsaufbau...

I: Mhim

K: Wie lange war eigentlich dieses Coaching, was du hattest, in der Gruppe? Und wie groß war die Gruppe?

I: Das waren 12 Teilnehmer und ich hab die über vier Module begleitet. Also jedes Modul à drei Tage. Die waren verteilt innerhalb eines Jahren oder 8 Monate. Das heißt ich hatte drei tage, also ich bin rüber geflogen, und ich hatte 3 Gruppen und war 9 oder 10 tage, und hatte jeweils eine Gruppe drei tage. Und dann hatten wir neben



Fhrungstheorien auch wirklich gegenseitiges Feedback und bungen gemacht, wo sie dann gemerkt haben und denen dann auch Feedback gegeben haben um zu erkennen, welche Verhaltensmuster sie eventuell haben...

K: (7:34) Und bei der, sag ich mal, Hast du eine Entwicklung von der Beziehungsebene ber die Zeit festgestellt?

I: Ja, definitiv. Das geht dann immer besser. Was ich jetzt aber auch intensiver mache, so hnliche Trainings habe ich jetzt aber auch in Malaysia und China und Singapur gemacht und da lasse ich viel mehr Zeit, weil Zeit ja das Thema ist, fr das Kennenlernen. Da also in diesen Gruppen, die ich dann habe, sind wir wirklich am ersten Tag wirklich nur damit beschftigt, wo sich die Teilnehmer vorstellen und wir Fragen stellen, sodass sie sich gegenseitig kennenlernen und auch so ein Gruppengefhl entsteht. Ne? Und auch wieder Vertrauen, ne? Also so ne integrative Leistung entsteht, ne?

hm, das haben wir damals nicht gemacht so intensive, und das htten wir machen sollen, ne?

K: Ok! Warum? (8:53)

I: Genau um das Vertrauen strker aufzubauen und dass sie sich auch gegenseitiger in der Gruppe viel mehr vertrauen, ne? Das ist natrlich eine andere Situation als so ein eins-zu-eins Coaching oder Skypecoaching oder was wei ich, ne? Wo man dann in dem Einzelgesprch eher und schneller in das Vertrauen kommt und sich dann ber den Austausch kennen lernt. Und so hast du halt 12 Teilnehmer, die sich dann irgendwie vorstellen mssen. Das dauert dann meistens von 10:00 Uhr bis 16:00/17:00 Uhr abends...

K: Ok, ja. Du hattest auch Sprache erwhnt und dass es auf Englisch stattgefunden hat, hm, inwiefern findest du, oder hast du beobachtet dass es einen Einfluss auf das Coaching oder auch auf die Beziehung zwischen dir und der Gruppe oder auch zwischen einander hat?

I: Ja, eigentlich einmal ganz simpel, die Art und Weise wie man sich ausdrckt ist schwieriger, dass ist natrlich auf der eigenen Sprache leichter. Aber dann glaube ich auch, bleibt dann auch eine gewisse Distanz da, weil dann auch den Bezug zum Herzen zu dieser Sprache dann fehlt, ne? Dann sind die sehr, die bleiben dann relativ sachlich, so sind meine Erfahrungen.

K: Ok

I: Mhm, viel passierte dann viel in den Pausen oder beim Mittagessen wo ich dann viel auf Spanisch gesprochen habe, ne? Das war auf English, weil ich einen Kollegen mit hatte, der kam aus sterreich und der sprach kein Spanisch und auerdem sollte Englisch als gemeinsame Sprache in unserem Unternehmen gestrkt werden, ne? Und deshalb hatten die, das Fhrungsteam dort entschieden, dass das alles auf English sein sollte. hm, aber es hat nicht geholfen, ne? Also ich denke, hm, wenn ich Coachings

auf Spanisch mache, ich überlege dass ich da mal Einzelcoaching gemacht habe auf Spanisch, aber ne. Ne, aber ich hab doch gemerkt, sobald ich mit denen auf Spanisch gesprochen habe, dass da dann auch eine ganz andere Ebene gefunden wurde, ne? (11:54) Vor allem dadurch dass ich dann perfekt Spanisch spreche, fließt das dann viel besser. Also dass ich jetzt nicht irgendwie mit Akzent Spanisch spreche oder so, da fühlten wir uns verbunden, da fühlten wir uns ja, eigentlich verbunden ist das Wort. (12:14)

K: Ok, du hattest auch vorher erwähnt, dass eine gewisse kulturelle Sensibilität, in deinem Falle zu Mexiko, eine Rolle spielt hat. Inwieweit, denkst du, beeinflusst dein Wissen über Mexiko die Beziehung, die du aufbaust?

I: Ja, also es kann zwei Seiten haben. Einmal, kann ich da auch als der deutsche Experte auftreten. Und dann könnte da so eine Art, ähm jetzt mal etwas radikal gesagt, aber ja Ehrfurcht entstehen, ne? Da kommt der Deutsche und ja, ich weiß nicht...

Und dann spielt aber dieses aus meiner Sicht, dieses ähm, die Tatsache, dass ich deutscher Experte bin spielt da eine größere Rolle als die Beziehung zum Coachee, ne? Und ähm, (13:40) und ich glaube dass es für mich dann eher eine Herausforderung ist wenn sie merken, aha, der ist auch Mexikaner, weil er sehr gut Spanisch spricht, dass ich dann viel mehr, ähm, ja da erst mal da mir die Autorität aufbauen müssen, ne? Also auch diese Anerkennung aufbauen muss, ne? Weil sie dann sagen, ah, der ist ja Mexikaner (lacht) der ist dann ja so ähnlich wie wir, ne? Und da gibt es in Mexiko gibt es schon so, wie man in Mexiko sagt *Malinchismo*, dass vieles, was aus dem Ausland kommt, wird viel besser und stärker anerkannt als das Eigene. (14:51)

K: Jap

I: Wenn da ein Deutscher kommt, hat der..., wird der gleich in eine ganz andere Schublade getan.

K (15:00) Ok, kann das von Vorteil sein?

I: Ja, definitiv. Das kann man auch ausschöpfen.

K: Ok. Nun ist ja oft von solchen sogenannten Critical Incidents die Sprache, insofern, dass zum Beispiel bei Sachen ein bisschen zu weit gegangen ist und dass dann die Beziehung beeinflusst auf Grund von Nicht-Wissens oder auf Grund von einfach just happend so, hast du schon einmal einen critical incident, oder in dieser Gruppe jetzt zum Beispiel, erlebt? Und kannst du dir erklären wodurch das kommt ist und inwiefern das einen Einfluss hatte? (15:41) Dann auf die weitere Zusammenarbeit oder die weitere Entwicklung der Beziehung?

I: Ja, es gab eine Situation, wo ich... Damals in Mexiko bin ich dann mit den Teilnehmern nach dem Training in eine Bar gegangen und da wurde dann Tequila getrunken und ähm... Und da gab es, da war die Grenze ein bisschen überschritten im Sinne von zu viel Nähe, ne? Ich glaube es ist auch gut, da eher nochmal die Distanz zu wahren, ne? Da habe ich mich zu sehr einlullen lassen in deren Gegebenheiten und

Gepflogenheiten und da hätte ich nochmal freundlich aber diliziert gesagt, recht schnell meine Grenze freundlich gesagt, weiter in das Trinken einsteige, sozusagen. Ja, es ist schwierig, auf der einen Seite habe ich damit eine Akzeptanz erfahren, aber für die Coach-Coachee Beziehung wäre es da eventuell besser gewesen da besser die Distanz gewährt zu haben, ja?

K: Ok. Konntest du das merken in den folgenden Sitzungen? Oder war das die letzte? (17:52)

I: Ne, das war recht am Anfang.

K: Hast du dann eine Veränderung gemerkt daraufhin?

I: Ja, das ist.. Ja, das hat zum Einen viel Vertrauen geschaffen. Aber da bin ich mir unsicher, ich hätte das nicht so intensiv mit denen machen sollen, aber ich hätte doch mit denen gehen sollen, sozusagen, aber nicht bis spät in die Puppen. Sondern da auch dann irgendwann zu sagen, das war toll hier, hier und ich gehe jetzt, das war dann irgendwie zu nahe, ne? Und das, was sich dann geändert hat, war glaube ich ja, eine große Vertrauensbasis, das ging dann aber fast zu einer Freundschaft über, und das war dann fast, also eigentlich ein professioneller Fehler.

K: Ok

I: Hatte nichts mit Kultur zu tun, sondern eher ein Fehler von meiner Seite.

K: (19:25) Ok, also, ähm, ganz zum Schluss eigentlich auch schon, eine letzte Frage zum Rekapitulieren ein bisschen. Nachdem wir jetzt, sage ich mal, ein paar Kategorien abgeklappert haben oder angesprochen haben. Was siehst du dann als die essentiellen oder fundamentalen Aspekte im Beziehungsaufbau zu den Coachees die du hattest?

I: Also definitiv sich Zeit nehmen und Zeit lassen für das Kennenlernen. Dann ähm ... Ich glaube im Endeffekt ist es sehr ähnlich wie mit allen anderen Klienten, Vertrauen aufzubauen, hinzuhören, Fragen zu stellen, auch was von sich selbst Preis geben, sodass sie merken, dass da der Andere auch mit seinen Fehlern oder sonstigen Macken dann auch ähnlich tickt bzw. die Situation auch kennt. Das hat da geholfen, fand ich. Ich weiß nicht, face to face tatsächlich, und im Business Kontext, wenn das Business Coachees sind, sich Zeit nehmen und dann auch abends länger zusammen und über Privates sich zu unterhalten. Die Sprache hilft definitiv, die Offenheit. Und wie gesagt, von sich selbst etwas preisgeben und sich zu öffnen. (22:23)

*(Informal conversation irrelevant for research)*

## Appendix 3b: Transcript ID2

K: Interviewer

I: Interviewee

*(Introduction by the interviewer about the research topic:*

*K: Ich habe den Schwerpunkt Lateinamerika in meinem Studium und wähle deswegen ein Lateinamerikanisches Land, was in meinem Fall Mexiko ist und Deutschland. Mich interessiert besonders welche Aspekte es genau sind, die eine Rolle in der Beziehung spielen zwischen Coach und coachee, vor allem wenn man sich anguckt dass Coach und Coachee in dem Falle nicht den selben kulturellen Hintergrund haben.*

*Ich habe einige Fragen und mich würde einfach nur interessieren, wie sie das erleben mit Ihren Klienten in Mexiko.*

*I: Ja, ja, mhm gerne, gerne)*

*Beginning of questions (1:34)*

K: Vielleicht ganz zu Anfang: Wie nehmen sie allgemein den Beziehungsaufbau im Interkulturellen Coaching wahr, zum Beispiel zu mexikanischen Klienten?

I: Ähm, also geht's auch darum das vielleicht zu vergleichen mit der deutschen Brille oder?

K: Ja...

I: oder sozusagen gegenüber deutschen Klienten vielleicht?

K: zum Beispiel, ja

I: Also ich denke mal dass eben im Kontaktaufbau mit den Mexikanern einmal so small talk persönlicher, persönliche Themen eine große Rolle spielen. Also dass man von sich als Coach etwas preisgibt, was man vor deutschen Coachees nicht so unbedingt tut, sondern da ist es sehr zielorientiert und da legt man fest woran möchte man arbeiten und dann passt das in der Regel.

Und da ist es im Beziehungsaufbau mit den Mexikanern aus meiner Sicht doch schon sehr viel wichtiger, dass man ein bisschen freundlich miteinander redet; small talk betreibt; vielleicht fragt was Erfahrungen sind, die sie vielleicht gemacht haben wenn sie in z.B. in Deutschland sind . Und ja, dann kann es durchaus mal sein dass man über persönliche, private Dinge spricht bevor man dann zum eigentlichen Grund des coachings kommt.

K: ok

I: Und da spielt natürlich auch das Thema „Du“ eine sehr große Rolle. Also in der

Zusammenarbeit mit deutschen Coachees, je nach dem wie alt die auch sind oder wie auch immer, würde man sich eher fürs „Sie“ entscheiden, aber für die Mexikaner bedeutet das „Sie“ oder das „usted“ dann eine sehr, sehr große Distanz, und die will man ja nicht haben als Coach. (3:37) Also deswegen ist da eigentlich immer das Du angebracht.

K: Ok, und führen sie Ihre Sessions sag ich mal persönlich durch oder über Skype und in welcher Sprache?(3:50)

I: Ähm, ja, also normalerweise ist das immer persönlich und oft werde ich auch gerade deswegen gebucht weil ich Spanisch spreche und das Gespräch dann eben auf Spanisch stattfinden kann. Also ich glaube ich habe noch nie ein Coaching gemacht in Deutsch mit einem Mexikaner.

K: Ok, das bringt mich zu meiner nächsten Frage, dem Thema Sprache. Welche Rolle spielt Sprache im Beziehungsaufbau in Coaching?

I: Oft werde ich auch gerade deswegen gebucht weil ich Spanisch spreche und das Gespräch dann eben auf Spanisch stattfinden kann. Also ich glaube ich habe noch nie ein Coaching gemacht in Deutsch mit einem Mexikaner. (5:00)

Ich hatte jetzt vor kurzem eine Mexikanerin, die hat sehr, sehr gut deutsch gesprochen, und wir haben auf Deutsch angefangen weil sie mir auch immer auf Deutsch geschrieben hat. Und dann habe ich eben zu ihr gesagt, wir können auch auf Spanisch übergehen. Und dann ‚Ah ja gerne, super!‘ Und dann hat man gemerkt, da ist sie dann auch ein ganz anderer Mensch geworden. Ja, weil ich glaube schon auch dass Sprache das Verhalten beeinflusst und man möchte ja gerade beim Coaching auch tiefergehende Dinge besprechen, und da ist es sehr, sehr wichtig dass man das in der Muttersprache macht. (5:42)

K: Ja, wie lange gehen in der Regel ihre Coachings? Also die Arbeit mit einem Klienten?

I: Also Sie meinen jetzt den ganzen Zyklus?

K: Ja, genau.

I: Das ist sehr unterschiedlich. Je nach dem, kann das mal nur eine Session sein; das können aber auch fünf Sessions sein. Aber das ist in der Regel nicht lange, also es sind jetzt nicht 20 Sitzungen. 5 – 10 vielleicht. Je nach dem, mit dem einen hat man eine Stunde, mit dem anderen hat man drei Stunden. Je nach dem, wie die Situation eben ist.

K: Ok. Inwieweit spielt Zeit eine Rolle im Beziehungsaufbau? Nehmen sie eine Entwicklung wahr von der Beziehung, über die Zeit hinweg?

I: Also ich sag mal, die Mexikaner, oder die mexikanische Kultur, ist ja eine, wo man relativ schnell sich öffnet und andockt. Ich weiß nicht, sie kennen vielleicht das Modell von Kokosnuss und der Mango, was auch mit Pfirsich benutzt wird, aber dieses

Verhalten eben, offen, und vielleicht auch gleich über private, persönliche Dinge mit eigentlich Fremden zu sprechen, das ist ja in Mexiko sehr normal. Deswegen ist es relative einfach am Anfang, wenn man sich darauf einlässt, und vor allem selber auch offen ist, da eine gute Beziehung aufzubauen. (7:39)

Ich glaube, was eben schwierig ist, wenn man diesen Schritt überspringt, eben keine Beziehung aufbaut, dass der Andere sich nicht wohl fühlt und so. Dann wird es wahrscheinlich schwierig ein gutes Ergebnis zu bekommen. Und ob das dann über die Zeit, nach sag ich mal fünf mal treffen... vielleicht ein wenig, aber ich glaube, gerade in der mexikanischen Kultur, ist es sehr wichtig von Anfang an sehr vertraut zu sein. Wohin gegen das in dem deutschen Setting anders ist. Da kennt man sich nach der fünften Session besser, redet vielleicht auch was privates. Das muss in Mexiko, oder mit Mexikanern, eigentlich von Anfang an sein. (8:35)

K: Ok. Und sehen sie da von sich auch einen gewissen Eigenanteil, sodass die Beziehung dann so klappen kann?

I: Ja natürlich. Also ich denke mal, das ist schon auch wichtig dass man einmal von sich selbst auch Dinge preisgibt oder Dinge sagt oder erzählt, die man vielleicht sonst nicht erzählen würde, jetzt in einem Coaching in Deutschland. Weil dort ist man dann eher fokussiert auf die Geschichte des Coachee und das ist eigentlich erst so ein Gespräch unter Freunden, könnte man so sagen, bevor man zum Thema kommt. (9:16)

Und sicherlich spielt da Sympathie auch eine Rolle und wenn ich jetzt feststellen würde, oh das passt irgendwie nicht, dann müsste man sehen ob man eben auch eine andere Lösung findet.

K: Und das passiert oft in den ersten Sessions, oder haben sie so etwas wie eine Kennenlernsession und beginnen dann die Sessions? Oder wie machen sie das?(9:38)

I: Das kommt ganz drauf an. In der Regel lege ich schon viel Wert darauf, dass die erste Session erst einmal so zum Kennenlernen ist. Wobei natürlich schon auch, gerade wenn man jetzt mit Firmen zusammen arbeitet, die Erwartungshaltung ist, dass man in der ersten Session auch arbeitet zu einem Thema. Und nicht nur, ich sag das jetzt mal etwas überspitzt, Kaffee trinkt. Aber das ist schon wichtig, und das ist auch Bestandteil der ersten Session dass man dann eben sagt: Wie war der Eindruck, was wollen wir weiter machen? Ähm, ne?

(10:22)

K: Haben Sie schon ein mal sogenannte critical incidents mit mexikanischen Klienten gehabt in Ihren Sessions?

I: Also sie meinen jetzt ob ich die einsetze, diese eh...

K: Ne, ob sie die mehr erlebt haben schon einmal, also ob die ihnen in ihren Sessions schon mal wiederfahren ist, sozusagen.

I: Also das irgendein Missverständnis jetzt Mexikanern während eines Coachings war, oder so...

K: Zum Beispiel...

(11:00)

I: Mhm... (*BREAK*) Wenn ich jetzt so nachdenke, also es fällt mir jetzt nichts, ähm, nichts ein, was jetzt irgendwie zum Abbruch oder, also geführt hat

K: Ok (11:06)

I: Mhm ja ne, eigentlich nicht. Eigentlich fällt mir da jetzt nichts zu ein.

(11:17)

K: Also zum Beispiel, ähm, also ich komme selber nicht aus dem Coaching-Hintergrund, habe aber natürlich schon viel gelesen

I: Ja, ja

K: und zum Beispiel so verschiedene Rollenverständnisse im Coaching könnten zu, habe ich gelesen, könnten zum Beispiel zu Problemen führen, sag ich mal. Im Sinne von wie, wie das Coaching verläuft. Oder wie sich das verhält. Also, verstehen des Rollenverständnisses, was der Coachee denkt Sie sollten machen, oder was Sie denken, der Coachee sollte machen.

I: Ah ok

K: Zum Beispiel

I: Also ich denke mal, man muss eben grundsätzlich wenn man mit Latinos, wenn man mit Mexikanern arbeitet, dann kann man einfach nicht, egal ob das jetzt Coaching, Training oder Consulting oder was auch immer ist, dann kann man nicht einfach, ähm, sag ich mal, (12:01) ,einen, ähm vielleicht in Deutschland entwickelten Coachingleitfaden anlegen...

K: Ja

I: ...Und sagt, ich beschreite jetzt einfach diesen Pfad, ob der Coachee abweicht von irgendwelchen Dingen, dann führe ich ihn wieder zurück. Ähm also ich glaube das wäre er was, was dann so ein critical incident wäre. Sondern ich glaube wichtig ist einfach, dass man ähm, den Coachee kommunizieren lässt, reden lässt, und dass man dann für sich vielleicht erst einmal bestimmte Hypothesen bildet; Schlüsse zieht, die man dann auch vielleicht über gewisse Übungen oder was man dann auch immer macht im Coaching; gewisse Fragen die man stellt, ähm, überprüft, ähm, aber man kann jetzt nicht einfach sagen, was weiß ich – keine Ahnung, ähm, da ist jetzt jemand, der – ach, ich weiß nicht – kann nicht Kritik äußern.

(13:03) Nehmen wir mal so ein Beispiel,

K: Ja

I: der Chef hat gesagt, mach ein Coaching, weil Du bist zu weich. Ne?

K: Ja

I: So etwas gibt es ja durchaus mal. Ähm, dann, wenn jetzt das Gespräch nicht nur um

Kritikäußern geht, und wenn der Coachee jetzt plötzlich in eine völlig andere Richtung läuft, und plötzlich irgend etwas ganz anderes macht, ähm, dann (*bad connection*) ..gehen. Ich glaube das ist dann vielleicht auch etwas, wo dann vielleicht auch der Auftraggeber gar nicht mit zufrieden ist. Ne?

K: Ja (13:35)

I: Eh, wenn man jetzt über Kritik äußern reden sollte, aber ich bin einfach der Meinung, der Mensch der da vor mir sitzt, der ist erst einmal meine erste Priorität....

K: Ja

I: ... Und nicht irgendwie das Drumrum, und wie der dann letztendlich das auch mit dem Auftraggeber, wer auch immer dahinter steckt, Unternehmen, was auch immer, das auch einspeist, das kann man dann im Coaching besprechen, aber wenn der Coachee jetzt gerade nicht bereit ist über Kritikäußern zu sprechen und lieber über – ich weiß nicht – ich habe andere Probleme, wie auch immer...

K: Ja (14:11)

I: ... reden will, ähm, dann muss ich mich darauf einlassen. Also und ich glaube das führt dann eben dazu, dass eben diese critical incidents eben weniger passieren, ne?

K: Ok (14:26)

I: Und dann kann es schon mal sein, dass der Coachee dann einen mal um Rat fragt, oder, ne? Aber das ist einfach nicht so strukturiert, nicht so zielorientiert wie man das sich vielleicht in Deutschland wünschen würde. Oder in Kulturen, die eher so zielorientiert, effizienzgetrieben sind.

K: Ok (14:47) mhm, verstehen. Ja, ja. Und dann hab ich noch ein paar andere Fragen zum Thema Vertrauen, zum Beispiel.

I: Ja

K: Weil das ja auch oft als sehr wichtiger Bestandteil in der Beziehung genannt wird, und mich würde interessieren, was sind die Faktoren, die Vertrauen schaffen in einer Beziehung zu mexikanischen Klienten. Wie nehmen Sie das wahr? Wie nehmen sie allgemein Vertrauen wahr? (15:14)

I: Ja, also ich glaube grundsätzlich kann man sagen, Mexikaner bauen Vertrauen über die persönliche Beziehung auf. Über die persönliche Schiene auf. Das heißt, man muss dem anderen sympathisch sein, der andere muss einem sympathisch sein. Man erzählt über, ähm, private Dinge, über Hobbies, über was auch immer. Und das ist vollkommen unabhängig was ich jetzt schon als – weiß ich nicht, als Profession mache, wie viele Coachings ich schon geben hab, ähm keine Ahnung, wie meine Erfahrung ist fachlich - das ist vollkommen egal wenn's um dieses Vertrauen aufbauen geht, geht's eigentlich erst einmal nur um den Mensch, der Mensch der vor mir sitzt und Ich. Ähm und auch das ist wieder eine andere Sache: Wenn man jetzt mal überlegt, wie wird vielleicht im deutschsprachigen Raum Vertrauen aufbauen, das ist sehr viel mehr sachorientiert, also da geht's drum wie professionell ist jemand. Man hinterfragt das, man klopft das ab; was hat jemand für Erfahrungen, ähm und so weiter, und dann baue ich eher so ein, wie



soll ich sage, so ein sachliches Vertrauen auf.

K: Ahja (16:36)

I: Und daraus entwickelt sich dann vielleicht auch die persönliche Schiene. Und man könnte sagen, in Mexiko ist es genau anders herum: Ich mach erst einmal diesen Vertrauensaufbau von Mensch zu Mensch, unabhängig davon ob man jetzt was man macht, was man beruflich tut. Und dann im Anschluss kommt man erst zu diesen beruflichen Erfahrungen, zu diesen beruflichen Themen. Aber die spielen für das Vertrauen an sich, nicht so eine große Rolle. Also da spielt auch kein Coachingzertifikat oder irgendwas eine Rolle für einen Mexikaner, wenn jemand hundert Zertifikate hat, aber man ist trotzdem nicht sympathisch, dann glaube ich wird es nicht funktionieren.

K: Ok, ja (17:24) Und haben Sie, wann, wie stellen Sie fest, dass, sag ich mal, vertrauen aufgebaut ist? Kann man so etwas feststellen? Wie stellen sie das fest? Woran machen sie das fest?

I: Naja, man kann das ja einmal über körperliche Signale auch erkennen: Sie kennen vielleicht auch aus dem NLP Pacing, zum Beispiel, wo dann eben auch an der Körpersprache des Anderen sieht, ist der in der Körpersprache meiner angepasst; wie sitzen wir; wie reden wir. Daran kann man glaube ich schon viel ablesen, ob wir, ob man auf einer Wellenlänge ist, oder eben nicht. (18:00)

Und dann finde ich kann man das auch immer an der Kommunikation an sich feststellen. Also wenn da wenig Kommunikation ist, dann ist das eben in Mexiko nicht so gut, weil, Latinos grundsätzlich eher Kommunikation bevorzugen und Schweigen ist eher etwas unangenehmes.

K: Ok, mhm, und ähm mich würde auch interessieren in wie weit ähm, sagen wir mal, beeinflusst ihr persönliches Wissen oder kulturelles Wissen über Mexiko die Beziehung oder den Beziehungsaufbau zu den mexikanischen Klienten. (18:51)

I: Ja, also natürlich glaube ich schon, dass ich dadurch, dass ich eben auch sehr viel Kontakt mit Lateinamerikanern habe, und ähm ja, auch Spanisch spreche, das ist ja auch eine Frage des Kommunikationsstils. Also, eh, Latinos, Mexikaner kommunizieren sehr viel indirekter, als das jetzt Deutsche tun, und da sieht man auch dann schon in der Wortwahl, in der Ausdrucksweise, ähm, dass das einfach ein anderer Ausdruck ist, eine andere Ausdrucksweise und da hilft eben das wir beide dann auch Spanisch reden und ich dann im Spanischen dann auch noch indirekter rede wie vielleicht sogar auch im Deutschen und damit immer mal wieder anecke, weil die Leute es gerne definitiv hätten.

K: Ahja (19:48) ok, mhm

Und haben sie schon einmal festgestellt, oder der gibt es Sachen wo sie sagen würden, es hat einen Vorteil nicht aus der selben, den selben kulturellen Hintergrund zu haben im Interkulturellen Coaching?

I: (20:03) Also ich glaube schon, weil wenn man ähm gerade wenn man jetzt eben die Situation hat, dass jemand im Ausland arbeitet, ein Mexikaner der im Ausland arbeitet, studiert, was auch immer, im Ausland lebt, ich hab auch schon häufig ähm quasi Begleitende oder Partner, die nicht gearbeitet haben, gecoacht. Ähm und da, glaube ich hilft es eben wenn man eben beide Kulturen versteht. Das ist gar nicht so wichtig ob man Mexikaner ist oder Deutscher, ich glaub es ist einfach wichtig, dass man beide Kulturen versteht. Und ich versuche eigentlich immer auch ähm Dinge die vielleicht dann auch für die andere Seite, aus der anderen Kultur negativ betrachtet werden, auch zu gucken was ist denn da vielleicht das Positive dahinter.

K : Ok

I: Oder auch in der, ja, das man eben, gerade wenn das jetzt irgendwie kontrastiert wird, weil Konflikte entstehen, aus der kulturellen, interkulturellen Situation heraus, das man dann eben nicht sagt, das eine ist gut, das andere ist schlecht, sondern dass man eben wirklich sieht, wo sind Vorteile beider Verhaltensweisen und sehr viel den Fokus darauf legt, wie kann man es zusammen führen.

K: Mhm (21:24)

I: Ähm, das heißt aber natürlich auch, dass es dann manchmal auch sinnhaft ist vielleicht auch die andere Seite, die jetzt vielleicht die deutsche Seite ist, irgendwie in dieser Weise zu sensibilisieren. Um da eben auch dieses Verständnis zu kreieren.

K: Ja, Ok (21:44)

I: Ich glaube schon, dass man als Coach eben auch damit man diese Hypothesen von denen ich vorher gesprochen habe und ein bisschen beleuchten kann oder dass man die so ein bisschen abklopfen kann, da braucht man einfach dieses kulturelle Wissen oder interkulturelle Wissen, weil viele Dinge, es sind eigentlich immer die gleichen Dinge die da hoch kommen. (22:14) Es ist die Kommunikation, direkte – indirekte, es hat Einfluss auf Konflikte, es ist das Thema Führung, Hierarchie, Umgang mit der Hierarchie. Es sind vielleicht Dinge die, wie gehe ich an Aufgaben ran, die eben sehr unterschiedlich sind. Das sind eigentlich so, gerade in der Arbeitswelt, so die typischen Themen.

K: Ja (22:34)

I: Und das ähm, ja, eh wenn man da einfach ein bisschen Hintergrundwissen hat, was sind so die typischen Konflikte, dann hilft einem das auch für das Coaching.

K: Mhm, ok (22:49) Schön, also wir waren recht schnell. Zum Schluss hätte ich eigentlich nur noch mal so ganz, ganz generell, nach unserem Gespräch jetzt, die Frage, welche, ihrer Meinung nach, sind denn die fundamentalen Aspekte, die den Aufbau von einer Beziehung mit Mexikanern doch sehr beeinflussen.

I: (23:12) Ja, also ich glaube wichtig ist einfach ähm der persönliche Kontakt, also dass man, selbst wenn man das vielleicht zukünftig in Skype macht, dass man irgendwie

versucht, den ersten Kontakt persönlich zu haben. Das würde ich immer empfehlen, auch mit anderen Nationalitäten, aber gerade mit Mexikanern noch viel mehr, weil eben dieses Sich-Kennenlernen von Mensch zu Mensch sehr wichtig ist. Und ähm ja, dass man sich da dann einfach auch Zeit lässt, auch sich zu beschnuppern, sich auszutauschen, und vielleicht über eigene Erfahrungen unabhängig von Coachingthemen zu sprechen. Also man muss einfach für die erste Session vielleicht mehr Zeit einplanen, sich da auch drauf einlassen, nicht da immer denken Oh Gott Oh Gott O Gott, wir haben jetzt irgendwie nur eine Stunde und äh da kommen wir jetzt nicht heute irgendwie zu einem Ergebnis.

Also das äh (24:18) das Coaching soll ja dem Coachee helfen, soll nicht mir helfen, deswegen ähm glaube ich, ist es eben wichtig, dass man sich auf den Gesprächspartner einlässt. Und es ist dann eben wichtig, dass man auch von sich selbst Dinge preisgibt, was vielleicht jetzt in einem anderen Setting, im deutschen Setting, gar nicht als professionell geht wenn der Coach da irgendwie über sich selbst redet, oder über seine persönliche Situation, und eben dass du, ich glaube dass ist schon eben ein wichtiger Punkt, dass du da, ja das man einfach erst einmal plaudert, ohne Hintergedanken, fast.

K: Ja, ok (25:02)

Schön, ja ich denke, wir sind soweit durch. Ich gucke mal eben, weil ich hab hier so einen schönen Leitfaden, den ich machen sollte (both chuckle)

Aber ich denke wir haben eigentlich alle Kategorien soweit abgehakt, ähm, ja!

Wir hätten soweit alles, ich würde das mal eben ausmachen. Mein ähm, recoding hier.

I: Ja (25:38)

*(Informal conversation irrelevant for the research)*

### Appendix 3c: Transcript ID3

K: Interviewer

I: Interviewee

*(Introduction by the interviewer about the research topic)*

K: Ok, ya, bien, entonces, c mo sabes, voy a hacer mi investigaci n sobre el coaching, sobre todo el coaching intercultural. Y quiero ver, cu les son los aspectos que juegan un papel en el establecimiento de la relaci n que tienes tu con tu cliente. Y en tu caso, especialmente con tus clientes alemanes. Y este, para empezar, quiz s as  una pregunta muy en general de tu experiencia.  C mo has vivido ese establecimiento de una relaci n con tus clientes alemanes? (00:38)

I: Muy bien, pues s , siempre es una desaf o para una mexicana. Explicar o tratar de darse a entender, no por cuesti n del idioma, sino por las diferencias culturales. De esos valores, eh y diferencias de valores. Entonces,  qu  es lo que hago yo para adentrarme un poco m s con un alem n? Pues lo que hago siempre es, con esas llamadas telef nicas,  no? este, escuchar y saber qu  es lo que necesita la persona, cu les son sus intereses, sus inquietudes,  no? A trav s de la llamada telef nica se personaliza m s y se llega m s a entender qu  se quiere. (1:35)

Otra cosa que tambi n yo utilizo es un cuestionario previo.

K: Mhm.

I: Eso quiere decir, que yo hago cuestionarios, donde formulo preguntas de lo que yo quiero saber para conocerlo mejor.

K: S .

I: Y para poderle dar, a trav s de la asesor a, a trav s del coaching, lo que el quiere o lo que ella quiere.

K: Ok (1:57)

I: Esa es la manera, tambi n l gicamente, tengo que estarme preparando contiguamente. Mientas m s conoces, en este caso yo conozco m s de la cultura alemana, leyendo por ejemplo, todos estos libros c mo son los alemanes, c mo piensan los alemanes, generalizando, eh, tambi n te ayuda.

K: S .

I: Otro factor, que es una ventaja para m , es que yo vengo de una familia bicultural. (2:27) No que yo vengo, sino que yo tengo una familia bicultural. Es decir, mi esposo es alem n. Yo convivo con una familia alemana, que es la suya. Tengo una hija que est  creciendo, que est  viviendo en esta sociedad. Entonces, ellos me ayudan mucho. Mi familia, mi esposo, mi hija, mi suegro, mi familia alemana. Me ayud  mucho entender. Y en el principio, cuando yo llegu  aqu , muchas cosas, no las entend a.

K: Sí

I: No sabía ¿por qué pensaban así? ¿por qué reaccionaban así? ¿por qué había ciertas actitudes? Entonces, yo soy observadora, soy buena observadora, entonces en observar la gente, me ha ayudado, me ha ayudado para leer, y ahora transportar esa experiencia, transportarla con el coaching, con la gente que me busca. (3:21)

K: Ok, sí. Entonces, ¿tu ves tus clientes en persona o por teléfono?

I: Me buscan, me buscan. Por llamada o por Email. Y de ahí viene que digo, bueno, vamos a hablar.

K: Sí. (3:38)

I: Entonces después de esa llamada, entonces ya viene la cita, nos sentamos o algo, pero siempre busco antes tener una llamada.

K: Ok. Entonces, ¿el idioma en el que haces el coaching es dependientemente del cliente y de sus gustos... ?

I: Claro, claro. Hay veces que lo tengo que hacer en español, hay veces que lo tengo que hacer en alemán, hay veces que lo tengo que hacer en inglés. Si es un grupo por ejemplo, y no todos hablan alemán, pues hay que hacerlo en inglés para que todos entiendan. Mi manera de trabajar más intensa es en español y en alemán, es lo que más uso con mis clientes. Si será el caso, lo hago también en inglés, pero son los dos idiomas que más manejo en este momento.

K: Entonces, ¿tu haces coachings en grupo pero también por persona?

I: Sí, o sea, me ha pasado que me han recomendado y me buscó una vez una pareja, entonces ella no hablaba español. Entonces vinieron como pareja, me buscaron, estuvieron en el coaching y pues todo era en alemán. Les di un cuestionario previo, y hablé con el primero por teléfono y estuvimos pues intercambiando, y luego ya vinieron y así empezamos el proceso. Pero siempre es importante la comunicación más personal que se puede.

K: Ok, va. (5:06) Entonces, ¿cuál es el papel del idioma, crees tu, en la relación que tienes con tu cliente?

I: Bueno, pues en realidad, el idioma siempre ha jugado un papel así muy importante. Claro que si yo busco un coaching, por su puesto lo voy a buscar en español. Si busco un coaching, una terapia, una asistencia de algo en específico, donde tengo que abrirme, donde tengo que hablar de cosas personales claro que lo voy a buscar en español.

K: Sí.

I: Si hay la opción, pues lo hago en español, si no, pues lo haré en alemán. Pero siempre, cuando tu tienes tu idioma, ya te sientes, más, que puedes sacar las cosas más fácilmente, ¿no?. Para mi, el idioma, ¿aunque no? llevo 14 años aquí, tengo familia aquí y todo, el alemán no es un problema para mi. Pero aún así, buscaría un coaching en español.

K: Sí. (6:09)

I: Eso me da una cierta manera de tranquilidad de sacarlo todo más fácil.

K: Ok. Y eso, lo has experimentado con tus clientes alemanes también...

I: Sí, sí, sí, claro, se los hago en su idioma, este, pues materno, ¿no?

K: Sí. Este, a ver, digamos, a veces, cuando lo haces en español digamos, ¿sientes alguna dificultad por parte de tus clientes, o sea, si ellos no son de habla hispano, digamos?

I: Sí, eh, por ejemplo, lo veo con la universidad de Passau, que ya lo di en español el semestre pasado. Ehm, claro que los chicos participan, claro que las actividades... Pero siempre sientes que hay cosas que se queda, ¿no? que ellos quisieran participar más abiertamente y decir su opinión bien profunda y discutir. Y a algunos les falta. Entonces algunos se quedan callados, otros hablan mucho, ¿no? Porque hablan perfectamente el español y han estado en no sé cuantos países... ¿no? Entonces ahí te das cuenta que el idioma sí juega un papel muy importante porque no se pueden expresar como ellos quisieran.

K: Entonces, eso se refleja también un poco, supongo, en el nivel de la relación que tienes con ellos, ¿no?

I: Desde mi punto de vista (7:32), sí. Desde mi punto de vista sí. Porque en mi caso, yo también lo he vivido, personalmente, o con los estudiantes, o con quienes me buscan, sí.

K: Sí. Va. Y este, yo he leído mucho del coaching, o sea, yo no tengo ninguna formación en el coaching ni nada, pero he leído que el tema de la confianza es algo esencial.

Y me interesaría saber, ¿cómo tu estableces confianza con tus clientes? O ¿cómo tu generas, o cómo tu te ganas la confianza? (8:12)

I: Pues, en este caso te voy a poner un ejemplo de un coaching que di, esto fue en español, este, y a esta persona, se abrió completamente conmigo, pero en primera porque era en su idioma. En segunda, porque yo le transmití que yo también paso por estas cosas, que yo soy inmigrante. Yo creo que esto juega un papel para.. es a mi favor, porque yo cuento de mis experiencias...yo les doy ejemplos de cosas que viví. Yo, no es así que en el libro tal dice que el señor, el caso estudiado, el critical incident, y no sé que o sea no. Les estoy hablando de viva voz. Entonces, esta mujer se siente identificada pues porque yo cuento y digo, bueno, son procesos, se viven, es un fase, es un choque cultural, ¿no? Y la mujer, bueno, se abrió y contó y sacó hasta cosas personales.

K: Sí

I: Que dice uno, bueno, eso es por la confianza, ¿no? Pero yo creo que ser autentico, en el sentido que, lo que dices concuerda con tu trabajo y te estás abriendo y siendo una persona más, y también soy humana y ahorita pues estoy haciendo el coaching, estoy de este lado, pero mi experiencia te puede ayudar. Creo que esto genera confianza.

K: Y esta persona era alemana con la que hiciste...

I: No, latinoamericana. Y se lo di en español claro.

K: Claro, s . Y  podr as decir algo en cuanto a tus clientes alemanes, c mo generas confianza?

B: S , este, tambi n con estos entrenamientos con alemanes, a m , me doy cuenta, que es m s f cil para m  que estos clientes alemanes ya estuvieron en un pa s latinoamericano. Eso es lo que he experimentado. Este, estoy capacitando a gente que va a M xico,  ltimamente, (*dog interrupts 10:21- 10: 26*)

Estas personas que se van a M xico, yo me doy cuenta, los que ya han viajado por el trabajo, que tienen que ir con sus colegas, tienen que ir con la empresa, que ya se fueron de vacaciones.. no s , que ya han estado en Latinoam rica o M xico, pues ya est n sensibilizados. Entonces con ellos entra mucho m s f cil la conexi n.

K: Ok

I: Porque ellos ya conocen c mo pienso yo, yo conozco como piensan ellos y estamos en ambas partes sensibilizados culturalmente. He tenido casos, con otras personas, que tambi n se iban a ir, y ellos, pues no conoc an mucho de mi cultura, que yo no... este, pues, bueno, que yo hice un trabajo por el mundo y s  estuve en Suram rica y yo conozco, pero a la hora de... esa era la teor a, pero a la hora de la practicar pues era as  como no, eso no se hace, no eso no es as , c mo es posible, mala calidad, en tanto tiempo de trabajo, eh hay que ense arles trabajar bien... cosas as  que dice uno, bueno, pienso que, si el alem n ha tenido contacto con culturas latinas o culturas extranjeras, es m s f cil, m s r pido ese proceso de confianza.

K: S  (*11:48*)

I: Bueno, desde mi experiencia. Bueno, la otra parte tambi n debe de estar sensibilizada porque si no, me cuesta siempre m s trabajo entrar a esa confianza.

K: Mhm, me imagino. (*12:00*)  Qu  largos son, normalmente tus coachings?  Cu nto dura, digamos?

I: Pueden durar un d a, puede durar dos d as. Eh, cuando la gente me busca de manera privada depende, pueden durar cinco sesiones, tres sesiones. Pues, la persona decide al final.

K: S 

I: Pues yo les digo, por m , llevar amos un proceso, pero pues la persona tambi n decide econ micamente, por el tiempo, porque trabaja, por todo, entonces tambi n ellos deciden.

K: Entonces,  c mo percibes, si hay digamos m s sesiones con una cliente alemana, c mo percibes ese factor de tiempo en cuanto a la relaci n?  Cambia la relaci n a lo largo del tiempo? De ser as ,  c mo cambiar a?  Puedes decir algo al respecto?

I: S , bueno, lo de las sesiones, yo lo que te podr a decir es, conforme va, pasando el tiempo, has teniendo otra sesi n y otra sesi n, pues la confianza va avanzando.

K: S  (*13:19*)

I: La confianza la tienes que ir ganando. Porque eso es la finalidad del coaching o del entrenamiento. Que la gente le puedas brindar tu apoyo porque ellos te dicen, bueno esto pasa, y ayuda, ¿no? Entonces, normalmente, conforme pasa cada sesi n, pues la gente se va abriendo poco m s.

K: Ok (13:45) Entonces si hay un cierto desarrollo y evoluci n de...

I: S , s .

K: Ok, va. Entonces,  hm, ¿c mo lo haces si solo hay una sesi n? O sea, tendr  que haber una conexi n directa...

I: S ... inmediata, s , tiene que ser todo muy intenso, muy... ¿no? Para que la gente reciba eso, que tu quieras...

K: Mhm, ok. (14:25) Antes tu has mencionado esto de los critical incidents. Este, ¿tu has, a lo largo de tu carrera como coach, vivido un critical incident o c mo se dice en espa ol? ¿Un incidente cr tico?

I: S , un incidente critico... S , a lo largo de mi carrera que si he tenido incidentes cr ticos como entrenadora o coach.. ¡s ! (*laughs*)

K: ¿Con alemanes tambi n?

I: S , en este caso era una pareja austriaca. (15:01) Una pareja austriaca poco sensibilizada culturalmente. Eh, y veces, como coach o entrenadora, piensan que tienes las respuestas para sus inseguridades y miedos y piensan que tu les vas a dar una receta de cocina ¿no?... entonces, viajas, te bajas del avi n, llegas, desempacas, ¿no? O sea, ¿no?

K: S .

I: No existe para esto de la interculturalidad. No existe una receta, una formula m gica. Es un trabajo personalizado, es un trabajo intenso, es un proceso. Pero la gente a veces quiere que tu llegues con la copia y dices A, B y C.

K: S .

I: Y me ha tocado. Me ha tocado en esa ocasi n con esta pareja y huh, fue, hee, fue dif cil, ¿no?

K: S .

I: Y creo que ya, en el coaching mismo estaban teniendo su choque cultural.

K: S 

I: Su choque cultural de que esto no era as , de que esto no pod a ser, de que c mo era posible. Entonces, s . S  hab a momentos as , dif ciles. D nde las personas se cierran un poco a ... a ver otras perspectivas. Entonces tiene uno que estar luchando y gan ndose la confianza. Bueno, vamos a ver, pero nosotros as  crecimos, otras personas as  crecen, y yo por ejemplo...

K: S .

I: Y eso est , ¿no? Regresando... y pues, est  bastante... bastante de tener... ese tipo de... (16:34)



K: Sí. Entonces, ¿el problema era también porque ellos también tenía un entendimiento diferente de lo que era el coaching?

I: Sí... Y porque... estaban que yo iba a llegar a decirles la solución a los problemas

K: Aha

I: Y este, le hacen esto, y hagan esto y va a funcionar, no?

K: Sí

I: Y no creo.. Pues, los miedos, no sabían del español, este, nunca habían estado en México, eran muchos factores. Incluía todavía, el contrato con la empresa no estaban claras, o sea, eran muchos miedos que ahí estaban, ahí estaban, y pues influyeron al coaching bastante...

K: Sí, obviamente...

I: ¿No? O sea, siempre hay factores externos. Pero hay que siempre estar regresando a la gente (17:28). Regresando a bueno, qué sienten, y cómo crecieron, y ¿cómo es en México? y ¿cómo crece la gente?, y irse a la historia, y estar regresando, ¿no? Y el ejemplo, pues es este ¿no?

K: Sí. Entonces, has comunicado, tan pronto que te diste cuenta que hay como, quizás, pues una versión diferente para lo que van a hacer juntos.. este, pues empezaste a comunicar digamos, qué es lo que es diferente...

I: Exacto... exacto

K. Mhmim, entonces (18:04) Hasta qué punto, pues lo has dicho antes, pero nada más para aclarar, ¿hasta qué punto crees que tus conocimientos sobre Alemania o los alemanes en general influyen, cómo estableces la relación a tus clientes alemanes?

I: Considero que influye en gran parte. Eh, con lo de tener contacto directo diario con una cultura, digamos, tradicional alemana, o estos rituales que se pueden identificar como una cultura alemana (18:49) Eso me, me ha ayudado, me ha ayudado a entender cosas que para ese cliente es importante, que les gusta hablar de manera directa, les gusta ir al punto, ¿no?

K: Sí.

I: Les gusta la puntualidad, que les gusta eh... yo soy muy esquemática, muy clara y eso me ha ayudado. Y también es parte de mi personalidad que sé organizarme bien, que soy esquemática, que soy muy visual, entonces.. y eso, entra bien a la cultura alemana.

K: Sí.

I: ¿No? Porque les gustan, ¿no? Zahlen, Daten, Fakten. Y entonces, yo soy un poco así, como estructurada en eso para explicar mis cosas

K: Sí

I: Y eso me ha ayudado. Y así hablamos de mi personalidad. Bueno, como lo digo, eh, yo no llegué a Alemania y me hice puntual y organizada (19:42), sino que yo ya era así. Entonces eso me ha ayudado también por parte de mi personalidad, ¿no? Ciertas cosas que yo ya traía en mí entra más fácil al momento de dar mis coachings

K: Sí

I: Porque también sé que a ellos les gusta esa fluidez, esta rapidez para ir avanzando, ¿no? Pues, estamos en punto A, bueno vamos a explicar, vamos a nuestra base, vamos a ver no? Y pues de ahí viene por ejemplo, en este caso, la realidad, y siempre trato de ir así como de la historia, del pasado y vengo a un ejemplo aquí en la realidad (20:16). Estas cosas me ayudan, porque ellos, el alemán, quiere tocarlos, saber, y no quedarse así en el mundo abstracto...

K: Abstracto, sí. Ok. Entonces, a veces, ¿has sentido que ha sido como alguna ventaja no ser de Alemania? Y darles este tipo de coaching? Por ejemplo, ¿puede ser una ventaja?

I: mhm, sí, sí. Definitivamente. Para mi, siento que es una ventaja, porque estoy dando otra perspectiva. O sea, por las herramientas que a la cultura le gusta o por las cosas cómo funcionan, pero desde mi perspectiva mexicana. Entonces, como que está bien esa mezcla. Y aparte, mi acento, ¿no? Porque yo hablo el alemán y me entienden todo, pero dicen, es que tu acento bueno no lo pierdas (21:11) y eso también hace algo también especial. Porque pues sabemos que, este, nos identificamos, no? Que estamos con esa otra cultura y ahí está ese acento, ¿no?

K: Sí.

I: ¡Ay wie süß! una vez me dijo una chica, que bien, ¿no? Y entonces, pues mi acento, ahí está, este, también mi idioma ahí está, y también esta mezcla. Yo pienso siempre que va a ser bueno que, que un mexicano le habla a un alemán de cómo, cómo es México, ¿no?

K: Sí.

I: Porque por más que tu hayas vivido algo en ese país, no... hay cosas muy sensibles, muy así, no? Que no puedes explicar...

K: Sí. Pero entonces ¿puede ser positivo también no ser de la misma cultura en cuanto a la relación...?(22:05)

I: Yo considero... en mi caso lo considero. Como por ejemplo, yo te podría decir, si un latino viene aquí y quiere entender la cultura alemana, claro que sea excelente que un alemán le hable de su cultura.

K: Sí.

I: Porque lo conoce muy, muy bien porque es lo tuyo. Sin embargo, yo siempre digo, tengo yo una ventaja. Yo soy mexicana, soy latina, pero yo viví un proceso de migración y puedo decirle como funcionó, lo que me sirvió y cómo lo viví. Y puedo contar de la historia, de la experiencia en Alemania.

K: Mhmim.

I: Pero desde mi perspectiva como migrante. Y eso, a pesar de no ser alemana, es un punto a mi favor.

K: Mhmim, sí, eso es verdad. (22:53)

I: Bueno, pues eso me lo imagino.

K: Sí, ok, pues muy interesante. (23:01) Sí, o sea, sí, hubo muchos aspectos nuevos para mí de lo que dijiste.

I: Sí?

K: Sí, pues eres la primera persona con la que estoy haciendo mi pequeña entrevista. Entonces, muchísimas gracias. Este, nada más rápido, para recapitular un poco..

I: Sí, sí.

K: ¿Cuáles son, en tu opinión, cuáles son los aspectos que juegan así un papel fundamental en la relación que estableces con tus clientes alemanes?

I: En que hables el idioma del cliente, en que muestres que has pasado por esos procesos que él va a vivir o que él está pasando. En dejar un poco la teoría y mostrar también tus experiencias, no solo lo que dijo el libro, sino lo que tú has vivido.

K: Sí

I: Y seguirte preparando sobre la cultura del cliente y sobre la tuya también. La preparación constante de ambas culturas en las que estás, es básica. El idioma materno de tu cliente es básico y el que te muestres como persona que ha pasado por eso y que es algo normal.

K: Sí.

I: Y que uno puede salir adelante en estos procesos culturales. (24:41)

K: Bien, ¡gracias! Pues yo creo que ya fue todo.

*(Informal conversation irrelevant for the research)*

## Appendix 3d: Transcript ID4

K: Interviewer

I: Interviewee

*(Introduction by the interviewer about the research topic)*

K: Para empezar quisiera saber, porque eso es importante para las estadísticas de la investigación, tu genero, tu edad, y ¿en qué trabajas en el contexto intercultural? De lo que yo recuerdo trabajas como coach, de vez en cuando, ¿no?

I: Sí, bueno, yo soy coordinadora del departamento de entrenamientos interculturales en [REDACTED] de México. Y ahí lo que hago es dar seminarios y coaching a los empleados. En general a los que lo necesiten, pero principalmente a Alemanes que vienen a México, y de menor medida, a Mexicanos que van a Alemania.

K: Ok, muy bien. Como, o sea, para mi investigación me interesa sobre todo tu trabajo que tu haces con los Alemanes en particular. Y quizá para calentar los motores, me interesaría cómo, basado en tu experiencia, ¿cómo estableces tu una relación con los clientes Alemanes? O sea, en general por ahora... (1:26)

I: Bueno, el primer contacto lo tengo cuando ellos llegan porque les ofrecemos un seminario de bienvenida, que es como un coaching más bien, un coaching de bienvenida a la persona, para pues platicar sobre las expectativas que tienen de su estancia, qué están esperando en el tiempo que estén ahí, qué miedo tienen, entonces, iniciamos con una platica personalizada, en la que ellos tienen la posibilidad de preguntar todas las dudas, inquietudes... ehm, pues sí, todas esas cuestiones que a lo mejor no tienen muy claras y necesitan alguien que los oriente. Entonces ese primer contacto es la forma, como, digamos, establecemos una, una relación con nuestro cliente.

Ehm, es una sesión en la cual, pues hemos notado que sirve mucho, porque ahí vemos si la persona está abierta al cambio o si las dificultades o preguntas que tienen pueden obstaculizar su desarrollo o si necesita mucho o poco apoyo durante su estancia. Hay personas que ya han viajado por muchos países y una estancia en México no les causa mucha ansiedad pero hay personas, pues por diferentes razones, personales o familiares, necesitan un poco más de apoyo o seguimiento y entonces ahí nosotros medimos un poco sus expectativas. Y vemos también en qué otra forma los podemos apoyar.

Entonces eso es el primer contacto y ya posteriormente ehh agendamos, si ellos lo requieren, mhm citas posteriores. Reciben después un seminario intercultural de dos días pero ya grupal y ahí tienen oportunidades de hacer más preguntas. En esta segunda parte del seminario, este, pues ya realizan o tienen temas más amplios. Sobre la cultura de México, cómo trabajamos etcétera. Y pues, después, si ellos necesitan, hacemos más

o tenemos otras sesiones de coaching personal, personalizado.

K: Ok, (3:48) ¿Y eso es luego en grupo también? ¿estos coachings? O ¿es como uno y uno?

I: Mhm, normalmente es uno y uno. Coaching, si ellos lo requieren así, se puede dar también con la familia. Hay personas que, porque también comparten, o las preguntas que les pasa, les pueden servir a ellos también. Y es una sesión en la cual ellos pueden incluso dialogar sobre temas que a lo mejor no habían contemplado. Entonces, ehm, normalmente el coaching se ofrece a la pareja también. Con los niños, pues obviamente es complicado porque, a menos que sean mayores de 16 años, pues tienen, ahora sí, pues tienen pocas preguntas o ellos están enfocados a otras situaciones. Entonces, es más bien para el esposo y la esposa.

K: Ok, (4:43) ¿Y los que vienen hablan español? O ¿en qué idiomas hablas tu con ellos?

I: No, todas las sesiones se les dan en su idioma. Tenemos sesiones para personas en inglés, ¿no? Pues, también tenemos llegadas de algunos otros países como de los Estados Unidos, y si no, en alemán. Yo creo que es importante poder comunicarse, que ellos se puedan comunicar en su idioma, porque la mayoría de las personas que vienen no tienen el nivel suficiente, bueno del español de por sí, ¿no? Pero también comunicarse en otro idioma muchas veces no puedes expresar lo mismo. Entonces un coaching así a ellos les da más comodidad, les da más amplitud, ¿no? Para exactamente decir lo que quieren, y así también se les explica y se evitan malos entendidos que a veces por el idioma pueden surgir.

K: Mhm, ah ok, porque (5:38) eso sería mi siguiente pregunta. Qué, o sea, ¿cuál es el papel del idioma en la relación que estableces tu con un cliente? y ¿en cuál idioma hablan...?

I: Sí, pues yo creo que el idioma juega un papel fundamental, sobre todo porque es una sesión en la cual tratamos de crear una atmósfera adecuada para que se sientan cómodos, para que se sientan bienvenidos. Es la primera, yo soy la primera persona la que ven cuando llegan, y eh darles la bienvenida en su idioma, dedicarles a ellos el tiempo, siempre así les hace sentir en más confianza, más protegidos. No que ya llegaron y pues a ver cómo le haces sino que haya alguien que los está esperando y los está recibiendo y que entienden.

Además, muchas veces aunque hablen un poco de español, pues todos sabemos cuando vas llegando, pues no es la misma fluidez que a lo mejor vas a tener en semanas (6:35) posteriores que ya te adaptas con el jetlag, ¿no? Están en un hotel, normalmente las sesiones se dan en los hoteles donde se están quedando, y entonces, pues sí. Ahí tienen por lo menos la posibilidad de llegar y preguntar todo lo que quieran preguntar para que esta ansiedad se disminuya.

K: Ok, (6:53) Y has mencionado antes el tema de la confianza y por lo que yo aprendí leyendo sobre ese tema, parecer ser un tema muy importante. Importante también porque juega un papel importante en la relación. Y, este, me interesaría saber cómo tu estableces, si tu dices que también a veces tienes coaching de uno a uno, o en general, si ves personas más de un a vez, ¿cómo estableces tu esa confianza?

I: (7:37) Mhmim. Pues, yo creo que es también una cuestión de la sensación a la atmosfera que crees. Obviamente hay personas más serias que no les gusta indagar en su vida personal (7:49) y ahí pues tienes que ir viendo, pues esto es algo que se va dando durante la conversación. Puedes ir teniendo la sensibilidad de ver si la persona está abierta hablar más de sí o menos de sí, vas a hacer preguntas más generales. Hay personas que prefieren hablar más del trabajo y no tanto de la vida diaria porque saben que a lo mejor saben que van a ser más en el trabajo. Entonces eso se va desarrollando conforme el cliente va a estar dando, va participando, ¿no? Normalmente vamos iniciando con una pequeña presentación. A ellos siempre les ofrezco al inicio hablarnos de tú. Y a colación de esto (8:28) también les explico que por qué de tu y cómo es en México para que ellos vayan entendiendo parte de la cultura y que en México, pues, no te hablas de usted, como en Alemania por ejemplo. Entonces esto ya al bajar el nivel más personal, como más, este más informal y ayuda que la atmosfera sea más, este pues sí, relajada.

K: Sí (8:55)

I: ¿No? Empezamos a ver algunos temas, yo tengo algunos folios que les presento, esto también abre la conversación y la discusión. Y ayuda que la persona va orientando las preguntas y sus respuestas. Entonces no que yo empiezo directamente hablarles cuéntame de ti o algo así, simplemente conforme vamos haciendo la presentación, o les voy enseñando imágenes, ellos van relacionando esto con preguntas y van abriendo la conversación. Ähm, más o menos las primera, bueno, el coaching que les damos dura cuatro horas y la primera hora quizá es la que, pues es más de apertura, ¿no? Establecer confianza, tenemos el coffee break, entonces eso también ayuda. O sea, en general un atmosfera mas cómoda.

Y así se va generando el nivel de confianza. Hay personas que necesitan menos tiempo (9:53). Vienen y están tan interesadas y quieren aprovechar y hacen cualquier tipo de preguntas porque prefieren tener la claridad. Y hay personas que les cuesta un poquito más y conforme pasa el tiempo pues ya van abriéndose a la sesión.

K: Ok, (10:12) Entonces, si el coaching es de cuatro horas, ¿son cuatro horas por separados o es una sesión de cuatro horas? Nada más para entender...

I: La primer sesión es de cuatro horas seguidos.

K: Ok, y luego, en base a esto ven ¿qué es lo que más o menos necesita esta persona y ahí desarrollan un plan para la persona? o ¿cómo funciona?

I: El plan, el plan para la persona no es tan individualizado. Digamos que la sesión más individualizada es esta.

K: Ok, va.

I: Eh se les da todo el tiempo para todas las preguntas que tengan, se les muestra información, se les da... ahora sí que todo tipo de retroalimentación e información general que requieren para el inicio de su estancia (10:53) Posteriormente, si ellos lo requieren, en esta sesión se puede agendar una segunda cita o tercera, pero la mayoría, en esta sesión se salen. Bueno, hasta ahora no he tenido nadie que sale insatisfecho afortunadamente. Salen muy contentos, salen más preparados o se sienten más seguros y no solicitan en este momento una segunda o tercera sesión. Eso ya se va dando como conforme van quedándose o conforme va el tiempo porque van confrontándose con nuevas situaciones que no tenían antes.

K: Sí (11:29)

I: Entonces, ehm, el segundo momento en el que nos vemos es el seminario grupal pero así, eso no lo solicitan ellos, sino que yo los invito.

K: Va.

I: Ya sé quienes están en el país, quienes son nuevos y los invito a la sesión. Y pues bueno, ahí también tienen oportunidad escuchar, opiniones de otros colegas, otras inquietudes que a lo mejor ellos no habían escuchado y que a lo mejor les ayuda también a ellos. Opiniones, tips, etcétera.

K: Ok, (12:00) Ok, y en cuanto a diferencias por ejemplo entre clientes alemanes y clientes, dijiste que también tienen de los Estados Unidos por ejemplo, ves como un *pattern* en sí, como algo que tu dirías que son factores, por ejemplo si haces esto y esto, eso crea confianza en tus clientes alemanes. O sea, por ejemplo que tienen confianza en la integridad o tienen confianza por tus habilidades, o no sé, algo así. ¿Ves algo ahí?

I: (12:40) Pues, sí, inclusive de la primera sesión cuando me presento ahí he notado, sobre todo en la cultura alemana, siempre sí se fijan quién está en frente, quién está dándole los tips, qué preparación tienes y por qué tú y no otra persona, ¿no? Eh, entonces pues obviamente para mí es importante que al presentarme, hablé un poco de mí, de lo que he hecho, de mi trayectoria para que ellos sepan que, bueno, no solamente soy mexicana, sino también tengo mucha experiencia en la cultura alemana, he vivido y trabajado allá, y pues soy coach profesional, no? Estoy certificada, mis credenciales, etcétera. El perfil entonces a ellos les da más seguridad de lo que les estás diciendo, es verídico, ¿no? Y no es algo que simplemente estoy infiriendo. Se les dan inclusive dentro de las sesiones tips de libros o tips de lecturas o tips de lugares en donde ellos puedan encontrar más información y en dado caso profundizar en lo que les está diciendo. Entonces, también les da mas seguridad saber que todo lo que les informamos de cierta forma esta validad, ¿no? Por otras teorías. (13:58) Y esto les ayuda pues a abrirse más a las cosas que se les está diciendo, ¿no?

Yo creo que esto es muy importante y bueno, también, sobre todo trato usar ejemplos reales, ejemplos que yo sé que ellos viven. Obviamente de manera general con los cuales ellos se puedan relacionar. Entonces esta afinidad crea que dicen, ah, sí me pasó, ah pues entonces exactamente eso es lo que estoy sintiendo por lo que estoy pasando y

así entonces validan que todo esto, que les estoy explicando, está exactamente, o es muy aliado a la situación que tienen. (14:44)

Obviamente lo hacemos con esta intención porque es un seminario o un coaching personalizado y hablamos precisamente de estos temas que a ellos les afectan.

Entonces con eso ellos sí se identifican y empiezan a participar incluso poner ejemplos por su parte, y así la misma información se va validando.

Y pues el nivel de confianza empieza a incrementar también y se va validando con los ejemplos que ellos nos dan, con los ejemplos que nosotros les damos.

Y pues, yo creo que sí es importante por eso mismo que hablan en su idioma...

K: Sí (15:24)

I: Y lo que más les agrada es que haya una coach mexicana. Porque en Alemania muchas veces les dan el coaching alemanes mismos, que han vivido muy poco tiempo en México. Y hay tips y situaciones que realmente ya son irreales o obsoletas y entonces cuando llegan a México se dan cuenta que así no es y el echo de tener a alguien que es mexicana, que entiende las dos culturas, que ha trabajado en los dos países les da mas confianza.

K: (15:56) Ok, y ähm ¿has vivido unas situaciones de los así llamados critical incidents o incidentes críticos con tus clientes alemanes? y de ser así, ¿cómo han afectado la relación, por ejemplo? ¿Qué era o qué pasó ahí? (16:12)

I: Pues, como tal, incidentes críticos no. Ehm, digamos, durante el proceso del seminario o coachings, pues ahí no, salen a veces temas, pero no son de gravedad, por así decirlo como incidentes que pueden afectar su estancia.

Esto, puede ser bueno y malo, porque muchas veces eh les pasan ciertas situaciones en el trabajo pero por la falta de tiempo ya no se acercan tantos a nosotros por hablar del tema aunque les ofrecemos el servicio, aunque les ofrecemos el apoyo. En el día a día es difícil que alguien vuelva a acercarse, ¿no? Además de esas dos sesiones que ya están planeadas es muy complejo y ellos mismos empiezan pues ya hacer su red de contactos y entonces empiezan a apoyar con ellos. Pero ya posteriormente, directamente ya no regresan con la frecuencia que a lo mejor nosotros recomendaríamos. (17:14)

K: Sí. Y como has mencionado antes, tus experiencias de Alemania o tus propias experiencias de Alemania también tienen un afecto en ese sentido. ¿Tu ves, en ese sentido, una ventaja que tu tienes esa experiencia? O ¿en qué manera sería eso una ventaja? (17:46)

I: Sí, pues es una ventaja enorme. No es lo mismo y dar solamente una presentación sobre México y hablar con alguien como si fuera psicólogo porque pues eso no te acerca a la realidad de tu cliente. Tienes que conocerlo, su forma de pensar, su forma de interpretar las cosas, mhm, sus costumbres. Porque les puedes dar ejemplos generales pero no van a identificar. Cuando conoces ambas culturas, inclusive el humor, puedes permitirte a veces inclusive hacer una broma durante el coaching para relajar un poco el



ambiente. Pero si no lo sabes hacer en el momento indicado, o de la forma indicada, pues no va a resultar, no?

K: Mhim

I: Entonces, el conocer a tu cliente y conocer su cultura, lo que ellos esperan, eh, c mo interpretan la situaci n,  no? Y pues ah  entre la cultura, y entre la mexicana y la alemana hay tantas diferencias, ehm, extremas, digamos, en cuanto a c mo manejamos el tiempo, como nos comunicamos de manera directa o indirecta. Entonces, si yo empieza con mi cliente hablar de estos temas, pues le doy ejemplos de lo que ha sucedido en Alemania, como son las costumbres all  en la forma de trabajo inclusive. Como entre las colegas te relacionas y entonces comparo estos ejemplos con la situaci n en M xico. Obviamente, si no tuviera esa experiencia en Alemania , pues no podr a relacionar los ejemplos ni tampoco podr a entender a lo mejor las inquietudes de mi cliente porque no s  a qu  se esta refiriendo si no conozco su contexto de d nde viene pues entonces me iba a hacer muy dif cil. (19:30)

K: Ok

I: Por eso, al momento tambi n inclusive tambi n darles esos ejemplos ellos se identifican de lo que conozco de la cultura. Y entonces, tienen esta claridad de ver diferencias o similitudes, y tips o t cnicas para no caer en shocks, o no caer en una practicas que no son adecuadas. Por eso creo que es fundamental. Yo no atrever a dar un seminario de una cultura que no conozco o en la que he vivido muy poco.

K: Ok

I: Yo creo que para conocer una cultura o dar coaching o seminarios debes de tener un amplio conocimiento no solo de la vida diaria porque te puedes ir de vacaciones pero no es igual, no? Pues obviamente ya en la parte laboral, este, la parte de los valores y los principios de la cultura, por c mo se rige pues ya es un poco m s profundo (20:27)

K: S . S , seguramente. (20:29) Pues yo creo que ya nada m s tengo una ultima pregunta que realmente es nada m s para recapitular un poco.  Cu les son los aspectos que juegan un papel en el establecimiento de una relaci n con tus clientes alemanes en ese contexto? (20:52)

I: Los elementos que juegan.. Me puedes repetir la pregunta lo siento

K: S ,  cu les son los aspectos que juegan un papel en el establecimiento de una relaci n con tu cliente alem n?

I: Mhim, bueno, el idioma, que ya lo mencionamos varias veces.

K: Mhim

I: El hablar de m  y presentarme, y  por qu ? Porque en el momento que les digo que he vivido en Alemania, en tal ciudad, a lo mejor ya se identifican como ah  yo he vivido ah  o esa ciudad es bonita o no, no es mi preferida encuentras un punto en com n. Entonces yo creo que encontrar puntos en com n es algo muy humano. Tratas de buscar siempre personas que tengan afinidades contigo. Y cuando no tan, pues ya han vivido en ciertas ciudades, cu nto tiempo ha estado all , en qu  empresas ha trabajado pues ya se

empiezan a identificar. O les pregunto de las áreas en las que están... Platíco un poco del área, no? También eso es importante platicar un poco de las áreas de trabajo en la empresa. Entonces si me dices, estoy en calidad, ah pues mira, estás con [REDACTED] con [REDACTED], entonces ¿no? con ciertas persona, que ya conozco también unas colegas de ellos. Y esa afinidad, esa cercanía, que intento conectar ayuda mucho a la relación. Encontrar siempre puntos en común, afinidades, quizá personas en común (22:23)

K: Ah ok

I: Eh, bueno, pues obviamente el idioma.

K: Sí.

I: Pues yo creo que eso es lo principal y poco a poco pues la conversación se va orientando a los puntos principales.

K: Sí

I: A lo mejor al inicio es muy general, y les empiezo a preguntar, ¿a dónde vives ya que te mudaste a México, no? Me dicen la zona, yo le digo ah pues por esta zona está, no sé, tal restaurante, o mira, esta zona está muy bonita. Entonces, tratar de generar empatía, no?

Buscar puntos en común.

K: Sí (23:00)

I: El, eh, tratar de identificarnos como que somos del mismo bando digamos. Así que vean que estás en su parte, que estás tratando de apoyarlos, para que empiecen a abrirse y a... pues sí, tener más confianza para comentar contigo ciertos temas.

K: ok

I: Yo creo que eso es para mí lo más importante y eso se va dando conforme tu, pues con la experiencia. Tu vas viendo qué clientes necesitan más tiempo, que clientes necesitan tiempo. Y pues yo creo que eso son los aspectos principales.

K: Y olvidé preguntarte antes, ¿desde hace cuando haces tu coaching así con Alemanes? (23:50) ¿Desde siempre casi?, o ¿cómo?...

I: (23:55) Mira, eh, yo empecé en esta profesión en el 2010 eh, en Alemania. Y aquí en México específicamente, desde el 2014. Entonces desde el 2014 que estoy en el departamento en esta forma como te lo estoy comentando es digamos la experiencia digamos que se ha desarrollado más amplio. Y bueno, en [REDACTED] siempre tenemos llegadas, no? Personas que van y vienen y eso me permite tener mayor amplitud de oportunidad de tener este tipo de sesiones que a lo mejor en Alemania también, pero eran mas esporádicas. Aquí en México pues es parte de mi trabajo. Pues digamos diario en cuanto a preparación, en cuanto a la realización y conducción del coaching.

K: Ok

I: Entonces, en esta forma como te lo he comentado, yo creo que a partir del 2014.

K: Ok, muy bien, gracias. Y dijiste, que también tienes un certificado, ¿no?

I: Sí, bueno, estoy certificada en el International Profiler, que es una especie para dar coaching y para medir las habilidades internacionales de los empleados. También soy coach o trainer intercultural certificada. Y bueno pues mis estudios también están

orientados a, este, estudios interculturales europeos. Entonces...

K: Sí (25:27)

I: Pues sí, yo creo que aunado todo eso, entre otros cursos que he tomado pues es lo que me ha ayudado a realizar el trabajo en el que estoy ahora.

K: Ok, muy bien. Me imagino, sí. Pues, ¡muchas gracias! (25:40) ...

*(Informal conversation irrelevant for the research)*

### Appendix 3e: Transcript ID5

K: Interviewer

I: Interviewee

*(Introduction by the interviewer about the research topic)*

*(1:25)*

K: Perfecto. Ok, entonces la primer pregunta es una pregunta muy en general. Quizá, si te acuerdas, estoy investigando el establecimiento de una relación entre coach y coachee, sobre todo si coach y coachee no son de la misma cultura, por llamarlo así.

I: mhmm

K: Entonces, me interesaría saber, para empezar, ¿cómo tu has vivido el establecimiento de una relación con tus coachees, sobre todo tus coachees alemanes? *(2:13)*

I: Ok, coachees alemanes, como te había dicho la vez pasada, no he tenido muchos, pero si me he enfocado en el mercado internacional. Así que sí he tenido muchos coachees que no eran de mi cultura, con los que me comunico ya sea en inglés o en español, que incluso algunos de habla española que pertenecen a una cultura diferente. Pero básicamente, lo que sí te puedo decir es que la relación sí se establece – para mí no hay una diferencia, hablando desde el punto de vista cultural, a la hora de hablar que tratamos los temas del coaching. O sea, yo no veo ahí un punto que diga, ah bueno, porque eres alemán te trato diferente o las cosas funcionan diferente en la relación del coaching. Simplemente porque desde mi perspectiva, el proceso es igual para todos en el aspecto que.. como el proceso no cambia, pero obviamente que una persona lo vive diferente. Y muchas veces sí creo que influye la cultura, el idioma etcétera pero no, no impacta los resultados o en cómo se establece el desarrollo del coaching en sí. *(3:20)*

K: Ok, has mencionado el idioma, y me interesaría saber, ¿cómo ves tú el papel del idioma en el establecimiento de la relación del coaching?

I: Definitivamente es importante y es una de las razones también por las que yo no me dedico de lleno a trabajar *(3:40)* con coachees alemanes, al menos no al nivel individual, por lo pronto. Porque obviamente el idioma tiene un impacto muy importante en cómo se va desarrollando una sesión de coaching. O sea, yo por ejemplo, que mi idioma materno es el español y el inglés lo domino también, me puedo comunicar mucho más fácil y hábilmente. Aunque domino también el alemán, ¿sabes? eh hay cosas, palabras muy específicas, que no me las sé y en alemán las digo en tres frases en lugar de decirla en dos palabras, y el impacto que eso causa en una persona pues es distinto. *(4:18)*

Entonces, definitivamente que considero que el idioma es un factor clave e importante, porque es la herramienta con la nos estamos comunicando. Y en el coaching es súper importante todo lo que hablamos, no lo que escuchamos, sino lo que hablamos en ese proceso. (4:35)

K: Y ¿has tenido a veces coachings en los que hablaste en español, tu idioma materna, y el coachee también en español pero que no era su idioma materna? ¿O tan pronto que tu usas español el coachee es hablante nativo de español también? (4:52)

I: No, o sea en español no, generalmente los coachees con los que he trabajado en español en general tienen el español como su lengua materna. Pero sí he trabajado en inglés con coachees que el inglés no es su lengua materna. O sea, los dos estamos usando como una lengua extranjera.

K: Ok. Y ¿cómo has vivido esa experiencia?

I: ¡Súper bien! Ahí no creo que he tenido ningún problema. Incluso he trabajado con clientes cuya lengua materna es el inglés y la mía no, y también, claro, en estos casos... bueno, en el casos que para los dos es el idioma extranjera no habido ningún problema porque el nivel es muy similar y entonces hay un entendimiento de que nos estamos comunicando en un nivel similar. Además, la realidad es, que yo me formé como coach en inglés entonces muchos de los conceptos que se maneja y todo lo domino porque así lo aprendí, al final de cuenta, ¿no? Así que no es complicado ni ha sido complicado para mí. O sea el inglés yo creo que, definitivamente, nunca lo he visto como una barrera. O sea, en cuanto al idioma no, y la gente que es nativa y por lo tanto obviamente lo habla mejor que yo, siempre lo he aclarado desde el principio, que si hay algo que no te suene o quizá no te lo voy a poder saber decir o te lo voy a explicar, pues no es mi lengua materna y nunca he tenido problema. O digo, no sé cómo se dice tal cosa en inglés y ya te dice, pues se dice así. Y ya nos reímos y seguimos avanzando. (6:33)

K: Ok, ah perfecto. Muy bien, entonces hay otro temas que yo he leído que es muy importante en el coaching, que es el tema de la confianza. Y me interesaría saber ¿cómo estableces tu confianza en tus sesiones?, y en general, ¿cómo te ganas la confianza de tus clientes?

I: (7:00) Muy bien, pues definitivamente es súper importante. Y ese proceso comienza desde la primera vez que yo hablo con alguien que se interesa trabajar conmigo. O sea, la confianza empieza a crear desde este momento, y bueno, lo único que te puedo decir es que, o sea para mí, la mejor herramienta para hacer (7:21) {que el cliente confíe en mí (*bad recoding due to bad internet connection*)} es siendo auténtica. O sea, yo soy, quien soy, sin ponerme una máscara de algo o tratar de impresionar quién está enfrente de mí, simplemente soy auténtica y comparto lo que sé. Tal cuál y lo que no sé también lo digo, no pues aquí no te puedo ayudar o ésta no es mi área algo así. Eso automáticamente genera mucha confianza. Incluso, compartir también de mi experiencia personal y no nada más de mi experiencia profesional. Hay un (*bad*

*connection*) a crear esa puente de confianza con los clientes. Incluso tengo un cliente que me lo escribió, que fue maravilloso que yo le compartiera cosas también desde mi perspectiva personal, quitando un poco el sombrero de coach. Para darse cuenta que yo también soy un ser humano y por lo tanto puedo empatizar con ellos. Porque he vivido muchas de las cosas que los clientes también han vivido, ¿no? Siempre digo que no llegan a mi por casualidad (8:19) y eso crea una confianza muy importante.

Simplemente es abrir la puerta y también respetar los procesos y también respetar el proceso de la confianza que tampoco es de un día para el otro. Sí me ha tocado gente que hace un click muy especial conmigo y se abren como libro desde el principio. También gente con la que he vivido un proceso de tres cuatro sesiones cuando veo, ¡ya! ahora sí, ya se abrieron, ¿no? (8:42). Y básicamente es eso, siendo autentica, abriendo las puertas, respetar el proceso y compartiendo desde mi perspectiva tanto profesional como personal porque eso pues, es como establecer esa conexión ¿sabes? Es decirte, yo también te entiendo porque yo también he pasado por eso o otro y eso establece el puente que se requiere. (9:07)

K: Y me interesaría saber ¿cómo te das cuenta cuándo están en el punto de abrirse? o ¿se puede dar cuenta de eso? Dijiste que algunos...

I: Sí, yo creo, yo me doy cuenta por el tipo de temas que abordan, o sea, cuando, al inicio a veces todo es como muy superficial, ya sabes, y son muy temas así de... y cuando empiezan a abrirse hay emociones, a compartir más de en realidad lo que pasa es esto o el Otro y ya hablando desde un a perspectiva mucho más personal, más emocional, entonces yo me doy cuenta que ya, ya ahí se estableció la confianza, ¿no? (9:48)

Tengo muchos clientes que, digo no muchos, tengo algunos clientes más bien que han venido conmigo y yo me doy cuenta que están todo por encima, por encima, por encima, vamos a hacer una lista de eso, vamos a hacer un plan de acción de lo otro y yo misma en este momento abro la puerta y les digo y cuando vas a hablar realmente de todo lo que te está frenando para alcanzarlo o.. y entonces es así como *{inhale sharply}*, ¿no? Y entonces pues aquí está, si no hablamos de eso, tampoco vas a avanzar hasta donde quieras ir. Y ya es como yo trato de abrir la puerta, pero si te das cuenta, o sea los temas que tocan y la profundidad a la que llegan es un índice para mi de que ya hay una confianza, ¿no? (10:28)

Se sienten seguros en el espacio en el que estamos y pueden hablar de lo que sea.

K: Ok , y olvidé preguntar en el principio: ¿a la mayoría de tus clientes los ves por Skype o ves en persona o por teléfono?

I: No, la mayoría de mis clientes son por Skype, yo trabajo generalmente online. Y sí he tenido clientes presenciales, gente que... (10:51) Lo que pasa es que yo vivo en un pueblito muy, muy chiquito y la mayoría de mis clientes ideales no están aquí.

Entonces por eso es también que yo trabajo online, pero cuando, he tenido ya dos o tres

clientes que viven cerca de la zona y tengo una oficina aquí en casa y aquí los recibo también.

Pero 90 por ciento a 95 por ciento de mi clientes es online.

K: Ok, y (11:17) ¿sientes que hay una diferencia ahí, o sea, en la forma de conducción del coaching en cuanto a la relación?

I: No, en cuanto a la relación no.. o sea. Lo único que a veces si digo, y sería para mi más gente presenciales porque hay momentos, momentos importantes en las sesiones en las que hacen falta un abrazo, sabes, un así como.. y eso obviamente en el mundo virtual, no lo puedo dar. Sin embargo, yo siempre, y lo he comprobado un montón de veces, que el proceso funciona igual, y es igualmente de efectivo si lo haces atreves de una computadora o si lo haces de frente a frente. La conexión energética, que es la parte más importante, que estemos conectados mi cliente y yo (12:08), esa se da independientemente que sea de frente a frente o en pantalla, y yo le he aprobado porque es algo que siento también. Soy una persona también muy sensible a la energía también. Y me doy cuenta cuando me cliente está, ¿sabes?, enviando algo, hablando de algo, siento la energía. Es la conexión que se da interpersonalmente. Lo único que te digo, a veces hace falta un abrazo, no a todo el mundo, pero hay veces que digo, ai, ahí se queda la pantalla como de... y a veces lo digo, no lo puedo hacer y lo digo, siéntete abrazada en este momento, pudiera estar abrazándote ahora. Este, es lo único que yo diría que falta, sin embargo, no afecta como para que el proceso no funcione o no sea exitoso. (12:56)

K: Ok. En cuanto al tiempo, para el establecimiento para una relación, ¿cómo recibes tu el factor tiempo en tus sesiones?

I: ¿A qué te refieres?

K: Como ... si hay, o juega un papel, o ¿sea entre más largo mejor la relación o por ahí?

I: Pues, es que es muy relativo. O sea, es relativo en como te dije hace rato que hay gente que le cuesta menos trabajo abrirse o se abre más rápido que otra, tarde o temprano, todos mis clientes se abren, y de echo yo no manejo hasta el momento proceso más largos, creo que el proceso más largo que he tenido es de 6 meses. Definitivamente se crea ahí una relación de confianza, se establece mucho más que cuando trabajas menos tiempo, pero a lo que voy es porque no tienen más tiempo trabajando, ¿no? Este, pero es relativo porque también depende mucho de la persona. Lo único que si, es que yo no trabajo por un período de menor a tres meses con mis clientes porque si siento que lo mínimo que se necesita, o sea entre tres y seis meses para mi es lo ideal, y mínimo es tres meses es lo que se necesita para decir aquí estamos, estamos al cool, estamos aprovechando todas la herramientas, está el canal abierto, ¿si me explico? O sea, porque eso sí antes trabajaba por semanas así como de seis semanas o algo así y siempre cuando sentí que ya la confianza empezaba, ahora sí deja de ser tema, pues terminaba el ciclo y nos dejamos como... ya, entonces esa época ya la cambié y desde hace el año pasado para acá vengo ofreciendo mínimo un ciclo de

tres meses, y máximo seis meses. Lo cual no quiere decir que una persona, digo, he tenido clientes que trabajaba conmigo hasta por un año, pero siempre en ciclos que se renuevan, ¿no? O sea, acabamos un ciclo y empezamos otro, ¿no? (15:01)

K: Ok, ¿y es una vez por la semana o es dependiente de su agenda?

I: Este, no, no del todo de su agenda, Yo, lo que ofrezco es un poco de flexibilidad en este aspecto. Yo, mi recomendación es siempre que las sesiones sean semanales, o cada dos semanas máximo. No recomiendo que pasen más de dos semanas porque se pierde el momento y el hilo y ya no tanto para el cliente que para mi, y eso es un regresar de ah, ¿en qué nos quedamos hace tres semanas o cuatro?, y ya no es, ¿sabes?, al final es lo que ellos quieren es llegar a sus metas lo más rápido posible y para ello necesitamos una continuidad. Es mi recomendación y como yo trabajo es que no pasen más de dos semanas, con excepciones, claro, si hay un viaje unas vacaciones o algo así, pues hay excepciones, pero es un proceso normal. Y también hay gente que quiere cada semana, cada semana y vamos avanzando, y hay gente que me dice no, necesito digerir y necesito tiempo para cumplir todos los compromisos que me llevo, entonces pues, entre una y dos semanas. (16:09)

K: Bueno, este, ¿tus has vivido unas experiencias como así se llaman incidentes críticos? O sea, ¿incidentes en los que tu dijiste o te diste cuenta que influyen a la relación de una forma negativa? Por ser así, ¿podrías explicar qué era...?

I: ¿La relación con el coachee? (16:38)

K: mhm

I: Que haya habido un incidente que haya influenciado de una manera negativa... Hasta ahorita afortunadamente no, en mis inicios tuve, pero ni siquiera llevo a hacer mi coachee. Era una persona que quería trabajar conmigo y en el momento que yo le, pero era también cuando yo estaba en el proceso de certificarme, y era en el momento en el que yo le presenté un acuerdo de coaching que yo manejo, porque es importante tener como las expectativas claras de qué es realmente el coaching, dónde están sus limitaciones y qué espero yo del coachee también en ese proceso y todo eso. Este, la persona reaccionó mal y me dijo que no iba a firmar nada, que era una locura, que cómo me atrevía, no sé, fue una cosa que nunca entendí y al final dije, pues es tu protección y la mía. O sea, no pretendo tomar ninguna, ninguna, cómo se dice, medida legal o algo así porque tampoco es un contrato legal sino que es nada más un acuerdo que estemos entendidos y no le parecía a esa persona y al final no llegó a trabajar conmigo y ya. Y de ahí en fuera (17:50), en realidad, no, o sea... He tenido dos casos de más de 50 que yo misma, o sea, ha sido un común acuerdo donde según nos hemos dado cuenta al principio que lo que era esa persona era más bien un proceso terapéutico que un proceso del coaching, y se lo ha referido alguien más, pero no ha acabado mal la relación, simplemente ha sido, pues darnos cuenta que no iba a avanzar por el camino que tenía que avanzar porque para sacarle beneficio a un proceso del coaching necesitas estar con



cierta estabilidad. O sea, una persona completamente deprimida no puede ir con una terapia con un coach, ¿no? O sea, entonces, este, de eso yo soy muy consciente y yo he hablado con mis clientes en ese momento, con esas dos personas, y les he dicho, tengo mis limitantes (18:37) y creo que te serviría más esto, y ellos estaban de acuerdo y se acababa así pero ... hasta ahora... tengo que pensar, porque luego estas cosas se olvida... pero no, no, he tenido realmente un incidente crítico realmente donde haya pasado algo negativo con unos clientes.

K: Mhm, Ok (18:56) Muy bien, pues está bien. O sea, no hay que tener esto...

I: Sí (*laughing*)

K: Ahora, quisiera preguntar un poco sobre la, así llamada consciencia cultural, Mhm, si, ¿hasta qué punto tus conocimientos, sobre todo de Alemania quizá o de los otros países de donde vienen tus coachees, ha influido la relación con tus clientes?

I: Bueno, es verdad que (19:27) cuando trabajo con gente mexicana, pues me identifico muchísimo más que con otros porque pues es obvio que venimos de la misma cultura, ¿no? O sea, puedo entender más el sentido de las cosas que me dicen, cómo se sienten con una parte background cultural. Pues, por ese lado sí, pero yo creo que eso pasa por cualquier ámbito, ¿no? No solo en el coaching. O sea, siempre te sientes más identificado con la gente de tu cultura.

Sin embargo, no creo que representa una ventaja o desventaja para ellos o los demás, porque al final de cuenta los temas que yo manejo no son tantos de la interculturalidad, sino más bien de cambio, cambios y por ejemplo, claro, comparto lo mismo con un israelí que se vino a Alemania, que con un mexicano, que con un francés. El hecho por ejemplo de cambiar a un país, a vivir en un país que no es el tuyo, cómo tu lo sabes también. Eso es algo que compartimos y eso creo es algo que nos afecta hasta cierto punto igual, sin importar de dónde vengamos, ¿no? O sea, ese proceso de cambio se vive en muchos de esas fases muy similar, ¿no? Entonces, más que la cultura, yo diría pues, sí es la cultura con ciertas personas pero no realmente que yo lo veo como una ventaja o desventaja, porque mi tema no es intercultural entre México y alguien más, ¿no? O sea, yo trabajo con Mexicanos pero también con otras culturas, y lo que nos une o nos identifica, más bien es como tema de experto mío y te vivencia personal, los cambios. O sea, cambios de trabajo, cambios de país o por ejemplo, también ha llegado conmigo mujeres que se sienten estancadas (21:21) profesionalmente porque volvieron madres, ¿no? Que es otro cambio muy importante, el reintegrarse y readaptarse después de ese cambio a su vida profesional. Pues es lo que las trae conmigo también.

K: Ok.

I: Entonces, ahí también hay un punto de conexión pero en realidad da igual si eres Alemana, Bélgica, Mexicana o China, o sea...

K: Sí (21:44) Muy bien, entonces para recapitular un poco, eso ya es la última pregunta.

I: Mhm

K: ¿Cuáles son, desde tu punto de vista, los aspectos que juegan un papel en el establecimiento de una relación con tu cliente?

I: Ok (22:04)... La confianza, definitivamente, es un punto muy importante, como ya mencionamos y ya te dije por qué. Ähm, aparte la confianza es también que las personas están dispuestas, o sea, dispuestas a invertir el tiempo, a poner el esfuerzo, a comprometerse a hacer las cosas de una manera distinta y a dar su cien por ciento porque al final esta no es una relación donde yo pongo un 50 y el cliente 50. Sino, yo pongo mi 100 y el cliente pone su 100. Si el cliente no pone su cien, pues tampoco va a haber 100 de resultados, ¿no? También es básico para la relación que estén abiertos. Abiertos a profundizar en cosas en las que no siempre estamos tan abiertos, a conocerse mejor. Abiertos a tomar responsabilidad por lo que se está creando en su vida y a romper obviamente con barreras, con hábitos, con creencias que los están frenando. Para mi también es muy importante que la gente no vea esto como un gasto sino como una inversión porque al final de cuenta están invirtiendo en ellos mismos y en su futuro. Lo que estoy haciendo pues es proponiendo un servicio para que no es así como... ¿sabes? O sea, es una inversión desde mi punto de vista.

Y pues que sea gente que esté dispuesta a moverse a la acción. Al que esté esperando que yo le resuelva la vida y (*bad connection*) (23:38) .. tienes que hacer esto, y lo tienes que hacer así... no va a funcionar nunca la relación en el coaching, ¿no? O sea porque no es lo que hago. O sea, no puedo darte una solución rápida que le sirva a todo el mundo ni decirte exactamente qué hacer, porque eso no es coaching. A esa gente yo le digo, no te puedo ayudar y tampoco al que esté nada más utilizando este espacio para seguirse quejando y culpando a otros de todo lo que les pasa, y quieren ver eso para desahogar conmigo, ¿no? Pero eso son cosas que yo aclaro desde el principio también en esta primera charla donde vamos creando procesos donde les explico que eso es lo que sí hago y lo que no hago, eso es lo que puedes esperar de mi, es lo que yo espero de ti e ir creando esa confianza, ¿no? O sea, para mi eso es básico para la relación y obviamente la empatía. La empatía, la habilidad para escuchar y entender a mi cliente desde su perspectiva, no desde la mía.

K: Mhm, ok (24:43)

I: Eso es básico para que la relación funcione, la confianza se de y el proceso en general sea exitoso.

K: Mhm, ok, muy bien. ¡Muchas gracias! Estas ya eran todas mis preguntas.

I: Perfecto. No, pues muchas gracias a ti, Katharina.... (25:05)

*(Informal conversation irrelevant for the research)*